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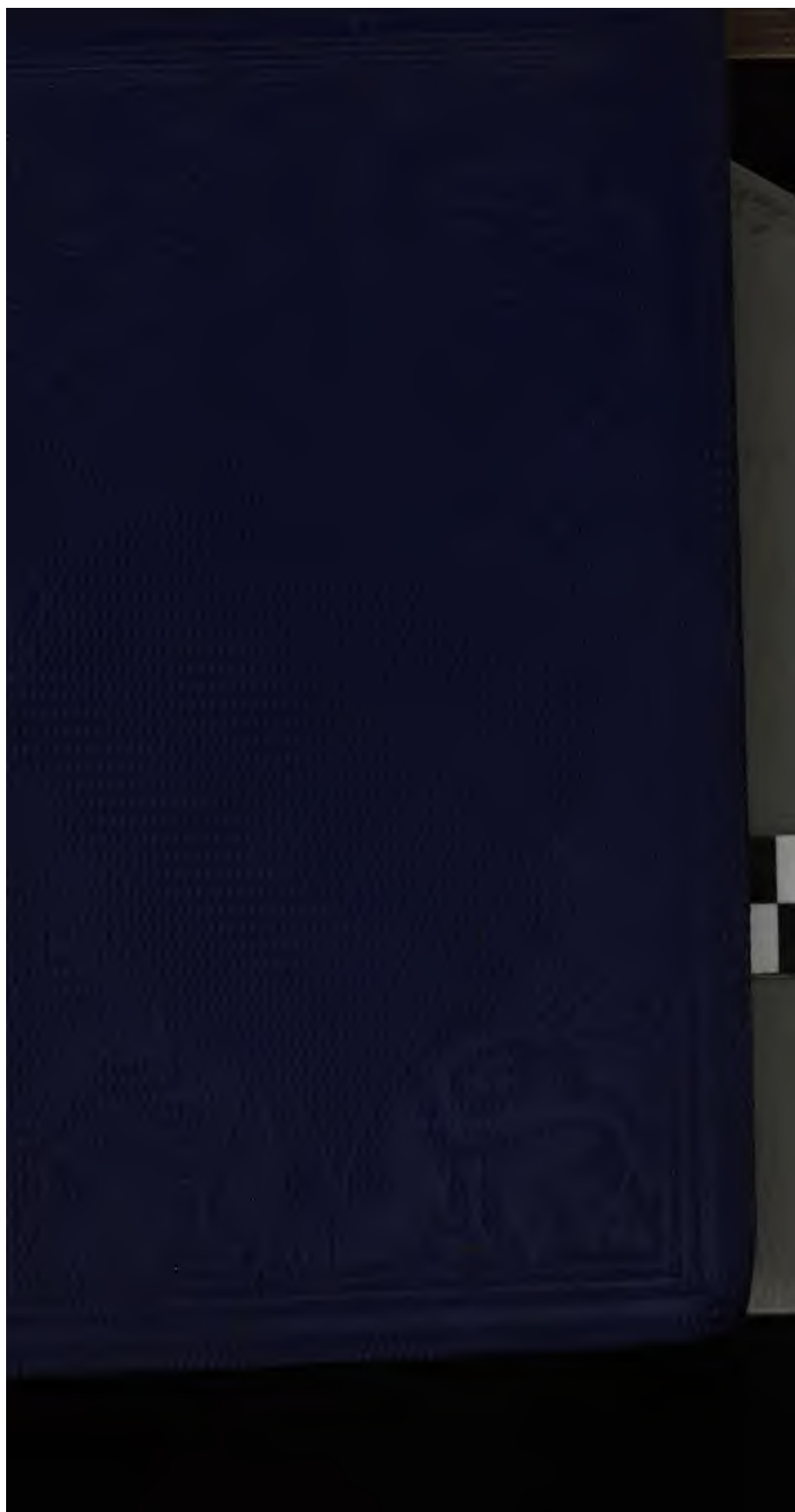
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**THE**

**BRIGANTINE.**



THE  
BRIGANTINE.

A STORY OF THE SEA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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# THE BRIGANTINE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BRIGANTINE.

How sweetly the moonbeams play on yon pagoda ; on the huts huddled together upon the shore ; on the moving waters of the river, and on the masts and yards of that noble little vessel ! Rangoon, the chief trading port of the Burmese station, is before us. Not a cloud is on the sky ; but the moon, pouring down her bright beams, displays with remarkable distinctness the various objects around.

That noble river, the Irrawaddy, here full a mile in width, rolls on to the sea, twenty-six miles distant. Looking down the river, we see on the right bank a dense jungle and forest of underwood. On the left, between the water's edge and the forest beyond, confused forms of huts ; here and there some, rising above their neighbours, stand out in bold

relief. A lofty, well-wooded hill rises beyond, and on its summit, glistening like burnished gold, stands the celebrated Shoodagon, or Golden Pagoda. Its base is lost in deep shadows. Glancing down the river, numerous small and large canoes and katoos may be seen all anchored near the shore. In the centre of the stream, with her bows up the river, for the tide is ebbing fast, is the dark form of a brigantine at anchor; her masts and cordage beautifully distinct. Faintly glimmering along the shore are lights in the different huts, while down the rapid stream float numbers of tiny rafts, decorated with flags and illuminated with many small lamps, as offerings to the god of Burmah. Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the Son of God appeared on earth to enlighten our gloomy state, and dispel the darkness of sin, but man here still bows to stocks and stones!

How solemn is the scene! but all is not still. We may hear the measured tread of the sailor pacing the brigantine's deck; the gurgling of the rushing water as it washes her bows; the hum of myriads of insects floating on the air; the howling of hungry jackals, and the sweet tones of the dulcimas rising above all, high, shrill, and piercing; then sinking into a low

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harmonious strain, giving warning that grim death has entered some Native home. Though wild and heathenish is this music, yet is it sweet and enchanting. Another sound is heard breaking rudely upon the ear ; the shrill, prolonged, wailing blast of the conch, sounding forth the hour of the night from the priest's lonely watch-tower.

Leaving this moonlight scene and moonlight melody, we will examine the brigantine more closely. A smarter-looking craft can scarcely be imagined. In the rich light of the moon her long jet-black hull, sitting like a swan deep in the water, shows out with great beauty, her bows sharp and stern low, with five large ports on each side. Her bowsprit is of great length, and raised very little above the graceful slope of her bulwarks ; her masts slender but lofty ; yards heavy and wide, carrying sails of great size, but now neatly furled. She is about three hundred and fifty tons, and altogether has the appearance of a swift sailer ; one, with all sails set, which would prove a very witch on the waves. Her rig is brigantine ; a square-rigged foremast, and fore-and-aft rigged mainmast, and she rides upon the water calm and still, with one anchor down and another hanging at her port cathead.

Passing around the stern, we look in vain for any name, and no flag flutters from her peak or mast-head. A boat is hanging on each quarter at davits, and a large lugger is being towed astern.

Stepping on board we observe she is flush deck fore-and-aft, with high bulwarks. Right in the bows, or, as sailors would say, in the eyes of the craft, is a fife rail, with a small capstan, and the windlass further aft : behind this is a small skylight and companion leading below. From the outside we noticed her portholes in the moonlight, while here we can see ten neat, and no mean-sized guns ranged along the deck. Before the foremast is a small hatchway, closed and tarped, on which a group of four men, are gathered, smoking and yawning.

Moving aft, we pass a coolis galley, a cleared space where the lugger is usually stowed, and another hatchway, also closed : abaft the mainmast is a capstan. Further aft still, a low, flat-roofed house rises above the deck, its top just level with the bulwarks, from which it is separated a few feet, leaving a passage all round, and affording a shelter for the helmsman behind. In front of this house is a door, now closed, and two small windows curtained with canvas, and windows at both sides of the house. A short

ladder on each side of the door leads to the houseroof or platform. Stepping up we find it surrounded by a man-rope, and in the centre is some large object hid from view by a huge tarpaulin thrown loosely over it. Beneath this is a long swivel gun. The mainsail boom, of tremendous length, just swings clear of the cannon, but in action it is raised still higher by the topping lift. All is still on board, save the low hum of the voices of the men forward and a noise of conversation beneath our feet. Our brigantine is truly a suspicious-looking craft; what is she? To solve this question let us go forward once more, and perhaps we may glean some information from the group forward.

I have said that they were four in number: a few words will suffice to make the reader acquainted with each. Leaning against the foremast is a short, stout man, very muscular, with giant-like shoulders. His features are remarkably coarse and broad, whilst a thick, reddish-brown moustache gives a fierce tone to his whole appearance. He is dressed in blue trousers and Guernsey frock, covered with a monkey-jacket, in the pockets of which his brawny hands are thrust; in a broad belt round his waist a heavy cutlass and brace of pistols; his head is

covered with a close-fitting cap. This man is a Dutchman. At his feet, sitting on the hatchway, and leaning against the mast, we notice a tall, bony, powerful man, about fifty-five years of age; with features long and good, very much sunburnt, while his mouth is hid by a huge moustache and beard of tremendous length. A short pipe is in his mouth, and he has a half wide-awake half sou'-wester on his head. His costume is a light blue jacket and trousers of same material, but he carries no arms. The third is most luxuriously stretched upon his back on the hard deck, and leisurely blowing the clouds from his black pipe. He is slightly built, tall, and apparently thirty-five years of age; he also is unarmed. The fourth tar is standing with folded arms. He is a short, active half-Spaniard, half-American, with piercing black eyes, and not more than thirty years of age. He is heavily armed with cutlass and pistols, and occasionally takes a turn up and down the deck, frequently looking over the side as if on the look-out for something.

"Is she coming yet, Carlo?" asks the second mentioned tar of the long beard, slowly moving the pipe from his mouth and speaking in slow, thick tones.

"I don't see her, boa'sun," replies Carlo. "The moon is too bright for her to venture out. Smother the moon! says I; she's always hanging out her light when she ain't wanted."

"Well, the sooner that yellow-coated priest comes the better," said the Dutchman, in thick, guttural tones with imperfect English. And as he uttered this opinion he moved slowly to the ship's side and looked over, but coming instantly back as the prostrate form said to the boatswain, "I say, Pipes; do you think the skipper is game for this job?" This he said with a roguish grin to the other two, well knowing it would draw forth a yarn from the old tar.

"Game, did ye say, Chips? What, Cap'n Grasper game? Hang it, man!" and here the smoke came out in fiercer puffs from the short clay; "hang it, man! if you'd seen him as I have, you'd know he's game enough to run a cargo through old Harry's fleet if wanted, and never want a hand to lift a keg or raise a sheet for him. Cap'n Harry Grasper not game! well, may I be spitted on my old marlinspike, dipped in a barrel of coal-tar, and roasted afore——"

What place he would have chosen for his warm dis-



play must remain in doubt, for Carlo interrupted his indignant speech by saying, "Come, hoasun, come, let's have a little about the skipper, now you've got a good breeze and all sail set; what says you, Dan?" turning as he spoke to the Dutchman.

"Ay, ay," said Dan, "let's have the yarn, for the tarnation yellow-liver'd 'pungee don't seem likely to come; but, Pipes, don't let's have it as long as a main-t'bowline."

Thus soothed by an appeal to his weaker nature—a love of yarning—having replenished his pipe, he thus began, whilst his hearers resumed their former positions—

"Well, lads, if you must have it, why, look out for squalls; for if I gets my old brain a raking up bygone days, you'll have enough to sleep on for one night, take my word for it. It is nearly five years ago now, just as it got dark, and no moon up, the cap'n and me with three other hands had taken a splendid cargo from the *Saucy Jane*, bless her old timbers!" here the old fellow affectionately patted the mast, and then continued, "we stowed the lugger as full as we could, and hoisted sail with a spanking breeze for Helford Cove—that's a little spot, Chips, on the Cornish coast, near to Falmouth, and a favourite of the cap'n's. Well,

lads, we bowled up the mouth of the river, when the cap'n spies a cutter just standing out from a little cove. 'What's to be done, cap'n,' says I; 'she's spied us afore this?' 'Down with you, boys,' cries Cap'n Harry; so under the canvas which covered the kegs the lads crept, while the cap'n kept at the tiller and I stood to trim sail. 'We must make a bold face of it, Bill,' says he; so, lads, on we bowled, just as if we'd a cargo of pilchards on board, and as we got within hail, cap'n sings out, 'Cutter a-hoy! I say, Lieutenant Joyce, I've got as splendid a cargo of French as ever I run in my life.' 'Trust you for that,' cried out the luff. 'Pon my life 'tis true,' says the skip'; but they wouldn't believe him, and we passed them all right, and soon turned up the creek where we intended dropping the kegs. We thought all was safe, but, sink the old craft! if the cutter didn't spy one of the lads' heads peeping out, and this made them wary of what we were about. But we didn't notice this, so we landed our cargo, stowed it in the old shed, and left two men to take the lugger further up the river out of sight, while the other kept watch, and Cap'n Grasper and me went up to Benny's—that's a little grog-house about a quarter mile from the river—and there we had a glass over our good luck. Ah, boys! it wasn't

good luck long, for in half-an-hour in runs young Joe, who was left to watch the kegs, and says, the cutter ran in, dropped her men, who seized every drop—but I've watched them and found they stowed them all in a large house behind a little grog-shop near the river, and they all were sitting there and drinking over their stroke o' luck."

"Well, cap'n was awful stormy, but soon he hit on a plan. 'Bill,' says he, 'I'll have every stick and drop again, and over the country before to-morrow!' Wasn't that game—eh, Chips? How did we do it? Ah, ah! boys, it was a jolly idea—ah, ah!" And the old tar laughed outright. "Well, boys, as the luff and his mates were getting chatty over their grog, they heard a noise outside of somebody singing. They opened the door, and in rolled a tipsy old countryman, with his hat slouched over his eyes. 'Hoorah!' cries he; 'hoorah, for the grog! More grog, my boys, and we'll lick 'em, the French dogs!' Then he pitched a singing, and he'd got a capital voice, too; so the luff stuck him on a keg, and made him sing, and there they were singing and drinking for hours, until all got sleepy and began to nod. Ah, lads, you should have seen the countryman then;

off went his hat and frock, and there stood Cap'n Harry Grasper with a pistol cocked in each hand. Oh, how the luff stared and hiccuped, and the others tried to get on their legs and draw their prickles. '*Jane, ahoy!*' sings out the cap'n : crash goes the door, and in jumps I and twenty of our boys, armed like bulldogs ; for you must know that Cap'n Harry sent me off with the lugger to fetch them, while he did his trick on the luff. Soon we lashed them all safe, and afore the morning every keg was far over the country. Don't ye call that game, Chips ?

But Chips was too full of humour to be easily silenced ; so he replied, " Well, old Salt, I don't know exactly ; 'twas pretty smart, I own, but the captain had plenty to back him !" Here he gave another knowing grin to the others, who silently enjoyed the yarn.

Indignant at this cool doubt of his skipper's courage, the boatswain returned to the assault with fierce whiffs at his pipe.

" Well, Chips, may I never pipe 'all hands to grog' again, if you ain't hard to please. You wouldn't have said that, I guess, if you'd have been with skipper and me when we landed the kegs at

Mawgan beach. Why, man, you'd have gone to Davy Jones with fright — ay, hang me, if you wouldn't !”

“How did you manage that lot, boa'sun ?” asked Carlo, who alternately listened and watched.

“Why, lad, after the Helford cove affair, the cutter was mighty sharp after us, I warrant, and many a close run we had too ; so we used to run the cargoes to Mawgan, t'other side of the land. I remember now it was a dirty night, wind sou'-west and blowing stormy, but the kegs must be got ashore. So cap'n and me takes some in the lug' and started with only three hands, for it took all hands nearly to manage the old craft. After a rough sail, for 'twas a wild night, we made the coast ; but the breakers were so strong, that we kept the boat off. Well, how to get the kegs ashore was the thing. Cap'n soon managed that. He ties a line round his waist ; leaves his pistols with me ; takes his cutlass, and over he jumps for a swim. Ah, lads, Cap'n Harry just can swim. Well, he had a tough job, I can tell you ; but he reached shore at last, and begins hauling the line, and we tailed on the kegs one after another, and Cap'n hauled 'em on to the beach where was the cave to stow them in. But just as the first

was landed—it was too dark to see well—such a row we heard! clash went the swords; and I heard cap'n's voice, 'Run her ashore, Bill; the blacks are at me!' Not another word did I want, lads, but dropping the kegs over with the cork float, in I runs the lugger through the breakers, and out I jumps, followed by the other hands, but, bless your heart! I was too late."

"Too late!" exclaimed Carlo, interrupting him, with an anxious voice.

"Yes, too late; but you're too fast," said the old boatswain, who was evidently nettled at being interrupted. He proceeded: "I was too late for the row, but not for the fun. It did my old heart good, lads, for there was the skipper with three coastguards; one he'd spitted, and sent to Davy Jones; another was on the sand, lashed hand and heel, and a third he was just making the lashing taut about.

" 'Here, bear a hand, Bill,' says he, and we carried the three into the cave, and then hauled all the kegs ashore afore their eyes. Our chums had seen the rocket we sent up from outside, and in two hours, boys, every keg was on the road to safety. Going back to the old *Jane*, Cap'n Harry told me the fun. Just as he hauled up keg number one, he heard a

rush—down goes the keg, out comes his cutlass, and he sees three coastguards having aim at him. Cap'n Harry wasn't afraid, not he, Chips, so he goes in for a row. First one he runs through—the others wanted to have him alive, but, knocking down their guard, cap'n closes in, and then he showed a trick or two, for he soon gets one down, puts his foot on his neck, while he ties t'other, and then, lads, just as he lashed number three, up comes I, too late for the row, but just in time for the spree. Do ye call that game, Chips?"

"Ah, that's something like it," said the carpenter, now avowing what he long before believed. "But come, old shell, the yarn's done, and pipe too, so let's agree to turn in."

"Ay, ay, chum," said Bill, the boatswain; "we'll get no canoe off while the moon shows her light."

"No; she's not coming yet," said Dan, moving off; and Carlo walked aft, whilst the old tar, pleased with his yarn, knocked the ashes from his pipe, and went below, with a "good night, lads, and give me a rouse if she should come alongside."

We will now take a peep into the after-cabin. The boatswain has enlightened us as to the nature

of the brigantine's pursuit ; she is, without a doubt, an English smuggler, and a ferocious one too, if we can judge from the old tar's coolness in speaking of killing the coastguardsman. We will now introduce the readers to the commander of the brigantine, Captain Harry Grasper.

Entering the little door in the front of the raised house, we descend a few steps into a large, comfortable-looking cabin, much more capacious than the raised roof led us to expect. A table is in the centre, at which three men are sitting. Over the table hangs a swinging lamp, lighted, and resting in racks ; across the ceiling is a formidable collection of swords and boarding-pikes. A stout pillar or stanchion rises through the upper deck, which is the support of the long gun, and thus takes its weight off the raised roof. The cabin contains six berths ; two on each side, and two large stern cabins, wherein Captain Harry Grasper has his dormitory. Separating the outer cabin from the body of the ship is a bulkhead, in which is a small door or sliding panel ; against the bulkhead are more weapons, muskets and pistols.

Now for the inmates. Glancing over the three, our eyes instinctively rest on the one at the head



of the table. Surely, if strength be characteristic of the man, this must be our noted skipper, for, although little above the average height, he has Samson-like limbs and shoulders. He is young, scarcely over thirty years; with dark brown hair and bushy whiskers, face full and pleasing, but often his brow contracts, and a flash of sternness crosses that manly face, and is gone again, as if some deep thought for a moment disturbed him. His features are those of a man who has a long, varied, and eventful tale to unfold. Sitting at his right hand is the mate, a tall, active, thin-faced man, with dark hair and whiskers, and looking with roguish eyes to one opposite to him, who is very short and slim, wearing spectacles before ferret-like eyes; his features are sharp and displeasing, but he is dressed with remarkable neatness and care. All three are engaged with grog bottles and glasses; the first two smoking, but the wearer of the spectacles is not.

“Talking seriously, doctor, and sinking all blarney, ’pon my honour I reverence the faculty. Doctors, in my humble opinion, are truly useful animals—hem! I mean gentlemen; quite as good as a plague or a war; as good did I say? ay, and better too, because

more discriminating. Plagues and wars carry off all within their reach, good and bad, old and young ; but the faculty, long life to its members !—your health, doctor—the faculty, I say, are better still, for they remove all old fellows, with more gold than enough, and young ones, with too little brains.” This was said with a roguish leer, and the mate continued : “ But I say, doctor, you’ll have enough opportunities to display your wondrous knowledge of the human frame before long, I reckon.” His spectacled friend opposite replied : “ As to that, Mr. Readywit, look out that you don’t taste my surgical skill, or have a few doses of my strength-restoring medicine ; for by all the gods of medicine, I’ll test my anatomical skill on your conger carcass. I want to make a few experiments on that thick skull of yours.”

“ Bravo ! old knight of the lancet ; well said, by Neptune !” roared the chaffing mate, while the doctor’s ferret-like eye gleamed with alternate flashes of anger and humour, as if undecided which to settle into.

“ Come, come, doctor, and you, Davis, belay all your chaff and blarney. Why, men, I should think you have had tongue-sparring enough by this time.

It's well you never get further. Fill up your glasses, and here's a health to his superb highness and most excellent but close-fisted Majesty the Golden Foot, Lord of the White Elephant, or King of the World, just as the old fellow likes. Thanks to his honour-loving heart, that the *Saucy Jane* has got such snug quarters." The speaker is the skipper, and at the invite, the glasses are immediately filled and drained.

"Well, doctor, how do you like Burmah and its dark-skinned heroes by this time? Tired, eh?" continued the last speaker.

"Tired, captain; I should say so, indeed. When shall we change quarters? There seems very little to be gained out of these fellows. Do you really intend helping in this coming war, captain?"

"Yes, doctor, but it will be helping myself. It appears to me we have done our work and deserve wages. My notion is this: to help the Lord of the Golden Foot; plenty of prizes to be got from friend and foe. I have half an idea, too, of running back one quiet night just to say farewell to some of the rich old merchants; and then we'll try fresh quarters. My plans are not quite formed yet, as I have a little

private job to execute, it seems, and there's no telling what may turn out of it."

"Eh, what's that?" said doctor and mate in a breath.

"Well, it seems," said the captain, "that some young fellow ashore has committed the sin of using his own wits, and takes a notion that the old images up in the pagoda are no more gods than my sea-boots; and so he gives them up; but the head of the priests, the seredan, or something like it they call him, gets out of temper with the young chap; thinks his god is insulted, and wants to have a little bit of revenge. This he told me the last time we had a yarn together, in his house up the hill. Well, they want me to walk off the young chap for a handsome consideration, and of course I've no objection. The old priest is going to send one of his trusty ones on board to-night, to fix the matter for certain, and the lads on deck are on the look-out for him.

Scarcely had Captain Grasper finished his speech, when the cuddy door opened, and Carlo's head peering in, was followed by the words—"The canoe's alongside, sir." The mate sprang up at once, and went on deck. In a few minutes footsteps were

heard approaching ; a form muffled in a large dark mantle descended the steps, and advancing into the cabin, threw off the mantle, thereby revealing the long-expected visitor, a tall priest of Burmah, with shaven head, and clad in a long, loose, yellow robe, wrapped in folds around his body.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE RESCUE.

IT is now necessary to explain how, in the year 1786, an English vessel was allowed to anchor in a Burmese river, and at one of their chief trading ports; for the Burmese are a bold, independent race, and extremely jealous of foreigners. For this purpose, we must retrace our steps a few years.

In the year 1781, Shembuan Minderagee Prau, a prince of Burmah, headed a conspiracy against the tyrant Chengzuan, then on the throne. The tyrant was slain, and Shembuan mounted the throne of Burmah as Emperor or "Boa." He was a very active sovereign, and built the city of Ummerapoora, to which he removed the seat of government, but possessing an insatiable love of power and dominion, he was led into many battles with the neighbouring kingdoms. Already had the Burmese penetrated and conquered as far as the northern province of Siam. From here, Shembuan could cast his

greedy eyes over the rich land and weakly defended towns of his neighbour. Looking soon increased with him to longing, and this was speedily fanned into a determination to possess; accordingly a war was waged against Siam, and the conquest effected.

The Burmese, however, failed to retain the inland ports and towns, but they successfully held on to their acquisitions along the seacoast, which they were enabled to do with their navy. Their possessions now extended to Mergin, a seaport about two hundred and fifty miles below Rangoon. The Siamese dominions extended still further south of this port, and the island of Junkseylon divided it from the Malay territories. This island Shembuan soon perceived would give him the sway of all the western coast, and prevent the Siamese vessels from trading with India; and no sooner was this perceived, than the capture of the island was planned.

In 1785, the summons to prepare for war was sent to the towns on the coasts and rivers of Burmah, and soon at Martabar, the rallying-point, a noble fleet of fifty war canoes was assembled. It was an imposing sight. The canoes, richly gilt, ranged from fifty to one hundred feet long, but were rather narrow, lying low in the water. The prow was flat, being a kind of plat-

form, on which a small cannon was mounted ; and here the soldiers fought. The stern rose high out of the water, curved and carved like a gondola. Each canoe, fitted with light sails, carried about sixty rowers, armed with sword and spear, and also thirty soldiers with rude muskets ; in all, forming an army of four thousand five hundred men. The costume of both soldier and rower was irregular, generally consisting of a coloured wrapper around the loins, one end being thrown gracefully over a shoulder, leaving their brown arms, legs, and chest naked. A light turban or head-cloth completed the dress. Short, stiff-built, determined men they were. The chief canoe was slightly larger than the others. From the stern floated the national flag of Burmah ; a white flag with a gay-coloured peacock in the centre.

Away went the fleet in joyful anticipation of a speedy victory. Music pealed and ordnance boomed as the canoes rapidly shot down the river ; skimming along the coast and resting by night at their newly-captured forts, they hasten to Junkseylon.

Whilst they are making their way, we will take a glance over land and water at Old England. George III. is on the throne. A name is sounding on many lips on the southern coast of England. Daring



deeds have been done; coastguard and revenue cutters defied; and blood, too, has been shed. The name of *Grasper*, the smuggler, coupled with the *Saucy Jane*, is almost a household word on the Cornish coast. The captain has a crew of over sixty daring men, besides officers and younger hands, under his command; and he has won their rough hearts. They love the bold rover for his kindness as well as for his bravery. He is a man of strong passions, with an inordinate love of wealth, to which he bows like a slave. *Grasper* has grown in daring; and now to smuggling is added piracy. It must be confessed that no British craft ever suffered from his freaks; but in his hazardous runs of contraband goods, more than one officer fell beneath the smuggler's steel. These things soon made the place too hot for the smuggler and his crew. Revenue cutters were too numerous to be evaded as before. What was to be done? After a long deliberation, a cruise to the Indian seas was decided upon, and the brigantine, well supplied with provisions and ammunition, ventured over the vast ocean, like a knight-errant of olden time, in quest of adventure and of gold.

To return to the Burmese expedition.

Night had fallen over the Siamese island of Junk-

seylon. A solemn stillness reigns over the threatened fort. The soldiers within know not of the coming danger, but through the mistiness of night several black objects may be discerned skimming silently over the water towards the island. Darkness completely veils the movements of the Burmese, and they make for the harbour, unmolested and unexpected. At the entrance the canoes divide into two parties : ten, filled with the bravest warriors, steal silently towards the land, intending to land their men to make an attack on the rear of the fort, whilst the remainder anxiously await the preconcerted signal which is to announce that the attack has been commenced.

Slowly and wearily the time rolls on. A brief space seems a long, dreary interval when all is expectation. At length the clear but distant howl of a jackal rises in the silent air. "Lagee! lagee!" shouts the Burmese chief, and away dash the canoes, the rowers rising on their seats at each stroke of their short oars; and, like the whirlwind, they sweep on to the long-coveted prey.

It is needless to detail the attack : the booming volley of the cannon and the din of musketry from the advancing canoes, mingled with the wild yells of

the attackers, and the fierce, defiant shouts and angry cries of the attacked. Suffice it, that the fight was brief and bloody, and daybreak found the Burmese masters of the fort.

But their triumph was short-lived ; the news had spread like wildfire to the mainland, and scarcely had the Burmese congratulated themselves on their speedy conquest, when a powerful fleet of Siamese war-boats and junks put off to the rescue. Some landed their forces at once, others steered for the mouth of the harbour to intercept the retreat of the foe. These movements were not unseen or unheeded by the Burmese, who drew their canoes across the entrance, thus presenting a formidable array of guns, manned by resolute and bold warriors. Inside the fort, all was in readiness for a stout resistance, for, like a snarling dog over his bone, they were unwilling to give up their prize without a bold defence.

These preparations, hurriedly told, were soon made, and without delay the assault began. For two long hours the conflict raged with fury, the combatants equalling in courage the soldiers of western nations.

But the odds against the Burmese were very great. Fresh troops kept pouring in from the mainland, and

although the war canoes still kept the harbour, the warriors defending the fort could not long sustain the terrific assaults of the Siamese. Each time the resistance became feebler, until at length, the chief seeing his men dropping fast, sent word for some of the canoes to run in whilst the others kept the foe at bay. Setting fire to the fort and huts, and giving a farewell volley to the enemy, they retreated to the beach, embarked, and pushed off, still keeping up a guerilla fire. This done, the hottest of the fray had still to be borne. Siamese boats in front and Siamese soldiers in the rear, running the gauntlet was the only chance of escape. They flinched not, for death stared each man in the face, and the Burmese neither give nor take quarter. With the desperation of men fighting for lives, homes, and all, the fleet dashed headlong at the blockading foe. The roar of cannon, rattle of musketry, whizzing of arrows, crash of meeting boats, ringing of swords, shouts and yells of the fighters, defy description ; for a time they were hidden in smoke. It was one rapid dash, and when the smoke cleared off, the Burmese canoes, crippled and sadly shorthanded, were seen gliding out into the open sea beyond.

Danger was not yet all over, for the Siamese, in-

censed at the bold assault, bent their oars in pursuit of the flying foe. It was an unequal race. Weak and dispirited from severe losses and the fatigue of the past night, the Burmese strained every muscle to escape, but their pursuers, flushed with victory, and thirsting for revenge, fresher and better manned, perceptibly gained ground. On, on sped the pursued and the pursuers, each racing for life; one to save, and the other to destroy, but in the excitement of the chase neither noticed a sail rising above the western horizon. Rapidly it rises out of the water, and now the hull is seen. She is close hauled on the port tack, and gradually her course and that of the speeding canoes will fall together.

Now the warriors of each party spy the craft, but as yet are unseen themselves, and neither slacken their speed nor lessen their interest. The Siamese are too numerous and the Burmese too dispirited to care. The crew on board observe the exciting chase; nearer and nearer the Siamese approach, and now commence firing stray shots and arrows at their still flying enemies.

The approaching ship is a brigantine: the bulwarks and rigging are crowded with men, watching the chase with looks of deep interest. Hark!

the captain's voice. "Port the helm! port braces!" The men fly to the ropes, and the vessel is now running towards the canoes with a north-east wind on her beam.

"Trice up the ports! out with the guns, my lads; smartly, men," cries the captain. "Here, boatswain, tend your bulldog."

All is quiet again; the guns are run out and manned, and the boatswain is at the long swivel gun on the platform, astern.

"The cowardly curs," says the captain to one at his side, "we'll see if the *Saucy Jane* can belay their patter, or no. All ready, my lads," he cries to the men.

"Ay, ay, sir," and as they spoke, the brigantine glided between the Burmese and Siamese boats. "Let fly, then!" and a heavy broadside was poured into the confident pursuers, which threw them into consternation as one of the canoes sank, dragging down in its vortex more than forty men. "Ready about!" cried Captain Grasper; and the men flew to their stations, whilst some reloaded the guns. "Down with the helm! helm's alee! port braces!" and around swung the craft on the other tack.

“Another bellyful, my boys! let them have it;” and crash went the port broadside into the native fleet. They wanted no more; they had found more than their match, and, as rapidly as they came, the Siamese, yelling with rage, pulled back to their recaptured island, without firing a single shot.

This timely rescue occupied but a little space, and the brigantine, after running some distance on her starboard tack, put about once more, and bore down upon the Burmese warriors, who were now lying at a distance, silent and grateful spectators of the Siamese overthrow.

Staring with wonder-filled eyes, they surrounded the brigantine, and their chief hastened on board to thank the friendly captain who had thus saved them from an inglorious death.

The reader must here understand that, long prior to the date of our story, English merchants had penetrated from Calcutta to the heart of Burmah, where they established houses of trade, and hence the chief of our rescued fleet was slightly acquainted with the English language, as also were many at the “Boa’s” court.

The conflict having now terminated, the brigantine

accompanied the Burmese fleet on their homeward route, and the chief, with a few of his followers, remained on board the *Saucy Jane*, which soon dropped her anchor off the town of Rangoon. The Emperor, hearing of this exploit, granted a free access to all his rivers to the captain, and allowed his crew to be provisioned free of cost ; for Shembuan, bowing still, and more lowly to the idol "power," meditated a second and grander assault on Junk-seylon, headed by himself, that he might wipe out the disgrace of the late repulse. For this enterprise he desired the co-operation of the strange ship. Captain Grasper was well content with the job in prospect, which promised to satisfy his gold-loving heart. A twelve-month had passed ; the *Saucy Jane* had often scoured the Indian seas, the terror of merchants, but the friend of the Burmese, and now, at the commencement of our tale, a new year had dawned upon the world, and Shembuan was assembling his fleet and troops for the intended expedition. Thus, reader, is solved the apparent mystery of an English vessel being found at anchor in a Burmese river in the year of our Lord 1786.



## CHAPTER III.

## SHOODAGON.

LEAVING Captain Grasper to receive his mysterious visitor, we will take a look on shore.

It is night, and a few hours prior to the incident related in the first chapter. The inhabitants of Rangoon are, with few exceptions, buried in sleep. A road, shaded by tall cocoa-nut and palm trees, extends from the river-side into the heart of the town. Passing along this now deserted way, a gentle slope gradually ascended, until, at a distance of nearly two miles from our starting-point, a sudden rise and a long covered way is reached, formed by flights of steps, short and wide, made of roughly-hewn stone, and the entrance guarded by two monstrous carved griffins. By the help of the moonlight, it is perceived that the flat roof, rising tier above tier as the hill rapidly increases in steepness, is supported by strong stone pillars. A wide road runs hence into the town below, at an angle with the one spoken of.

Passing a large, handsome house, standing at a little distance to the right of this covered way, surrounded by trees, let us hasten on. Flight after flight of steps are passed, and we at length emerge on a strange scene. We are on the flat top of a hill, bordered by trees. In the centre, rising to a height of three hundred and forty feet, is a splendid pagoda, the Shoodagon, shining like gold. In shape it is a cone, or sugar-loaf, octagonal at the base, (which is of vast circumference,) and ribbed with flights of small steps like the pyramids of Egypt, lessening and lessening in circumference as the altitude increases, until the pagoda terminates in a lofty spire of solid brass. The spire is capped by an iron network crown or umbrella, twenty-six feet high, and hung with many bells, which tinkle merrily as the wind whistles by. The steps are guarded at the corners by enormous griffins. The shape, it has been said, is that of a cone; it would be more aptly compared to an inverted speaking-trumpet, the base being large and then rising rapidly into a lofty pinnacle. The whole building is richly gilt, and truly is a magnificent spectacle.

The covered way is continued across the open space, and meets the body of the pagoda, where it is

expanded into a large, open-sided court, leading to the entrance of the huge temple.

Before entering this, let us pass around the building. At its base are numerous large and well-built temples, entering which, in each are found about twelve or fifteen gods, fifteen or twenty feet in height. These are made of various materials; some of wood, others of a beautiful white substance, smooth as polished marble and white as snow; others of a jet black, and all in a squatting posture. These are all representations of the Burmese god Guadama. Another building standing rather apart is like a huge grotto, the outside being indented with numerous niches, wherein small gods are placed, like the images of saints in the niches of Christian cathedrals and monasteries. This grotto rises into a point, something like a Chinese pagoda.

With this glance at the exterior, let us enter the venerable, time-hallowed temple of Shoodagon. Passing through the low, narrow entrance, we find ourselves in a large and high-roofed hall. In the centre, on a raised platform, rises an enormous figure of a god, richly gilt. Aided by the faint light of some lamps burning around the hall, we observe that the roof is dome-shaped; its top lost in

deep shadows, but apparently of great height. Around the sides of the stone-paved hall are several minor buildings, each standing separate ; large in themselves, but diminutive when compared with the vastness of the temple.

A solemn stillness reigns, broken only by the sound of footfalls dropping steadily on the flags, and the echoes rise into the lofty roof, clear and ringing, as if winding their way in a spiral form until lost in a humming sound at the top. These sounds proceed from a priest keeping his midnight and lonely watch in the sacred hall of his *god*. Awed by this silence we tread gently towards one of the side buildings, and there behold, stretched on small rush mats and buried in slumber, several of the priests ; the others are tenanted in a likemanner. In our explorations we notice another dome-shaped house, in appearance like the others, but at the back of the idol and guarded by a massive door. On entering, a flight of steps is before us descending into the bowels of the earth.

Come, reader, with the aid of our torch, taken from its resting place, let us descend. Down ! down ! and still down, into its awful stillness. Long spiral flights of steps are here, and we have passed in the

descent several arched ways, leading into dark passages. Heeding them not, we continue our downward path. Still more steps. Cold and clammy is the air in these mysterious depths; lizards are seen dragging their bloated and loathsome carcasses over the stones. The torch flame rises into the murky air, vainly battling with the deep gloom around. No light of heaven can penetrate here, but all is as dark as the minds of the priests above.

A low arched massive door abruptly checks our short moralizing. Here the steps, long and winding, terminate. We are at a great depth below the hall above. No sound is here: it is one unbroken chilly blank of silence and gloom. Night and horror reign undisturbed, filling the mind with strange imaginings of the dark deeds its slimy walls could unfold, had they but a voice. We possess not the key to this door, and must be content to let our discoveries rest here for a time.

Retracing our steps, we issue once more into the temple hall, and breathe freely the pure air of heaven—no, not pure, for it is tainted by the clouds of incense burning before the Burmese god. Replacing the torch, we hastily pass through the entrance, and down the covered way by which we came.

We have again reached the building before noticed as standing a little distance to the right of the way. Lights are in the various rooms: the house is built like a Chinese pagoda, rising story after story surrounded by balconies, and capped with a square edged roof, terminating in a point. This is the abode of the Seredan, or chief of the priesthood. We will now pass into a capacious room. It is square, lofty, built of teakwood, and lighted by a handsome chandelier pendent from the ceiling. The room is hung all round with rich curtains of silk, and many large medals, or plates, are suspended at the sides bearing divers inscriptions, being the praises of the Seredan, of which he is exceedingly proud. Couches for seats, covered with the dressed skins of animals, and a table strewn with manuscripts complete the furniture. Its occupants are two men, reclining on the couches, one engaged intently in smoking a long eastern pipe, or "hookah."

"And now, my brother, Monchaboo, let us enter into the important matter which lies at thine heart," spoke one of the occupants of the room, a person clad in the yellow robes which, with the shaven head, denote the priesthood, turning as he uttered these words to the smoker. This person, a corpulent native of the

wealthy class, who is clothed in a long, tight-sleeved, white muslin coat reaching to his ankles, closed at the neck, but opened all the length down ; thus disclosing a rich coloured wrapper around the waist, but leaving the legs and chest uncovered. A fanciful turban completes the costume.

"Hast thou performed thy promise, Symoo Seredan?" said he.

"I have," replied the priest ; "even now a faithful phongis whom I have often trusted with such matters, is on board the strange vessel to complete our arrangements."

"Good," returned Monchaboo, "good," he repeated with a pleasant countenance. "The family of Monchaboo shall yet rise and be equal to his brothers, Symoo Seredan and Manlong Maywoon. Ah, brother, our Buddha hath blessed thee and him. Well do I remember when we roamed the plains together, or skimmed the river in our canoes, three happy, equal boys. Since then thou hast been favoured, thou hast risen to great height of position, and now art the chief of the Rhahaans ; art Seredan of Shoodagon. Truly, thou art a prosperous man. And Manlong ; he, too, has risen high. Another stream floated him to the golden lands, and he is Maywoon of a broad

province; he has prospered well. Guadama has blessed him; but where am I? What is Monchaboo? Ah, men say I have wealth; but it is not so; I say it is false! I have tried by my merchandize, with patience and toil, to gain something and a little comfort; but I want more! I want to be equal with my prosperous brothers. I want to be honoured by my friends, and I will be!" Here the old man paused, while his small eyes flashed with the desire of wealth and the hope of success. Symoo Seredan remained buried in deep thought, for he was accustomed to these long tirades. At length Monchaboo with anger in his tones continued his remarks, half in soliloquy; "And shall I be thwarted, my brother? No, I say no! Domea has trodden on her father's and forefather's religion; she has spurned our gods and reviles Buddha." The Seredan here suddenly roused himself from his reverie and listened with eagerness; "Yes, she hath spurned our gods," continued the old man, "she hath chosen for her mate a bird of foul plumage; one who has also despised Buddha and reviled our worship—the low-born, wealthless Aungua. Shall they defeat Monchaboo? rather shall my spirit be forbidden to roam the hills of Meru, and share its joys; rather shall my shade toil on this



earth for ages and ages in all the vilest forms of life than they shall succeed. Domea shall bow to her father's desire, and be the wife of Munris Maywoon. Aungua shall feel a vengeance hallowed by the gods."

The old man here ceased, but his face glowed with the fires of rage, and his eyes, bent to the ground, beamed with deep desires and determination. For a few moments neither spoke, but then Monchaboo raised his eyes to the priest, saying, "Am I not right, my brother? will not the god assist me?"

Thus appealed to, the Seredan replied, but in calm tones, for though a man of deep passions, he had been trained to conceal them from outward gaze:

"Truly, Monchaboo, thou art right. I tell thee so. Make but thy daughter Domea bow to thy will; check and destroy her wayward desires, her longings to abjure our religion, and bring her back to its honoured and safe shelter again. The gods call thee to obey, and thou shalt prosper; golden veins shall pour into thy coffers; Monchaboo shall be known and honoured by all, his brothers shall look up to him as their head and their glory. Yes, my brother, the gods will help thee. Have not I, their son, their priest, told thee so, and already lent thee counsel and aid?"

"Truly, brother, thou hast; and when these

golden streams shall flow, Shoodagon shall be enriched: the priests of Shoomadoo shall look with eyes of envy at thy temple and thy priests: Monchaboo hath said it."

Again there was a pause. Each seemed buried in deep thought. The one meditated how to increase the glory of his much-loved god, and the other, how to increase his wealth and honour, even though all the finer feelings of relationship and love must be trodden down in the attempt: both with their whole souls intent on adoring—the one an idol of wood, and the other an idol of gold.

At length the silence was broken by the old man, who now, soothed by his outbursts and meditations, looked with a smiling face. The cloud had gone, and joyful hope lit up his features.

"Tell me, brother," said he, "how thou wilt manage to further my designs."

"My plans," replied the Seredan, "are these, brother. The stranger captain hath often visited our temple; I allowed not his feet to pollute its hallowed hall, but permitted him to gaze on the outer walls, and he has been in my house; for I have long been seeking to know more of distant lands—to know if their religion is not descended from our

ancient worship. I have read much in our traditions, and delight in searching out such wonders. This stranger, this dark-minded and misled man, who knows not the glories of our worship, and who will never share the bliss of Meru's smiling hills, is a wondrous being. Strange tales he has told me, and thus, my brother, we have become acquainted. He is ready for any deed ; his men know not our language, and thus all is safe. I have unfolded to him somewhat of my plans, and to-night, even now, my faithful Phongis is settling all further matters. Could we but beguile Aungua, the foul, polluted dog, from his home, this stranger captain would entrap him and confine him on board, and when the noise of his disappearance has ceased, the vaults of Shoodagon shall have a visitor."

" Good ! good !" exclaimed Monchaboo, with tones of delight ; " but, my brother, should he be inquired after, what then ?"

" I have prepared for that also," said the Seredan. " Our good Boa Shembuan has summoned his warriors to battle, and when the cry is raised for Aungua to head his troop, I will cause it to be said he is cowered and hath hid himself. This, Monchaboo, is my plan ; this done, it remains for thee to complete

the task, and when our soldiers return from their expedition, Domea will have forgotten her lover, and thou canst give her to Munris Maywoon, and thine heart<sup>\*</sup> will be gratified, and thy family honoured."

He ceased, and Monchaboo lifting his portly frame from the couch, turned to his brother, who had also risen, displaying a tall form, with a countenance marked with lines of deep thought.

"The night wears on, Symoo Seredan, and I will depart. Let thy servant bring me my horse, and I will go back to Kemmendine as I came, unattended, unobserved."

"Go, then, Monchaboo, and ere to-morrow's sun shines on Shoodagon, the Phongis shall bear thee the news."

The brothers parted, and whilst the old honour-serving father wends his way to his home, we will return on board the brigantine, and see how fares Captain Grasper and his visitor.

The priest, with large flashing eyes and a most repulsive countenance, at a motion from the captain, seated himself at the table, but refused to partake of the grog, for although a Phongis, one of the inferior priests, he was as abstemious as the Rhahaans, who were the higher class of the priesthood. Glancing

around, he observed that they were alone ; for the mate was on deck, and the doctor had retreated to his cabin, where he listened with great eagerness.

"I am later than you expected, captain," said the priest : "the moon shone too clear, and I lingered lest my brethren should miss me ; and now let us hasten over our arrangements, for the next watch in the sacred halls of Guadama is mine."

This was spoken, half in good English and half in Burmese. The conversation was carried on in this manner throughout. It mattered little who heard these arrangements, for the captain only could communicate with those on shore ; hence no disclosures could arise, his men being ignorant of the language. Besides, letting them into the secret of his plots might serve to rouse their interest and cement them more together in their unlawful brotherhood. Moreover, a desire which seems to flow in the veins of all white men, to excel the dark natives of other countries, even in evil and roguery, prompted the crew of the brigantine to secrecy.

A smile rapidly shot over Grasper's face, changing into a slight sneer, and then disappearing at the priest's mention of his duty in the idolatrous temple. The jovial captain thought himself vastly his com-

panion's superior, and looked with an eye of pity if not of scorn on his misguided mind.

"Our holy Seredan unfolded to you some of his wishes, did he not?" continued the priest.

"Yes," replied Grasper; "I know most all; and now how is it to be managed?"

"That," said the priest, "must be mutually arranged by us now. Our object is to entrap this youth, who has incurred the curse of Guadama, for renouncing his forefathers' holy religion. The Seredan rests not until Buddha is appeased, and thou shalt be enriched if thou wilt aid us. At various times this youth, who lives in the village of Kemmendine, three miles up the Irrawaddy, goes with a maiden to the house of an old apostate from our religion, called Momien, and returns again. After seeing her in safety to her father's home, and taking leave, he wends his way to the fort, for he is the captain of a horse troop. The Seredan proposes this: I am to glean information when they will next visit Momien. Thou must be in readiness with armed men, and as he returns to the fort, seize him; do not hurt him, but confine him in your ship. When the night is clouded, I will come with a Rhahaan whom the Seredan likewise trusts, and we will convey the

captive away. This, good captain, is our plan : speak ! is it good ?”

“Capital ! by my bonny *Jane* it is,” said the captain. “We’ll manage the young shark. Be as smart as you like, friend, and bring me word where to find the fish, and when to net him—and the job’s done.”

The Phongis now drew nearer to the smuggler, and glancing around once more to see that none were listening, he spoke almost in a whisper. “I have another little task, good captain ; but this time it is for ourselves ; bend low, lest other ears shall catch our words.”

Surprised at this air of secrecy, the captain obeyed, and bending low until their two heads almost touched, he said—

“Out with it, friend, if it’s good, and never fear but Captain Grasper will be all attention.”

“Captain,” said the priest, still in low tones, “at Kemmendine lives an old merchant, wealthy, very, very wealthy, but he is old and infirm. I know the house : I know where he keeps his treasure ; and what is easier than on the night you seize the youth, for you and some brave men to enter the old man’s house—I will guide you—and then seize the wealth.

It will soon be done ; the task is easy : no one will suspect you ; we shall have the youth and the money at once ; and if it be wise, we can hint that the youth has done the deed and fled. See, captain, how rich this will make us both !”

Thus urged the Phongis, as he feared the captain might hesitate. Not so the bold rover. As the priest had unfolded his dark designs, the smuggler had listened as if spellbound, with eyes opened wide ; his wonder and admiration increasing more and more ; and now, as the tempter ceased plying his golden persuasives, the flood found its vent in a long low whistle.

“ Whew ! my noble, keen wit,” said he, striking the table with one hand, making the glasses ring and ring again. “ Whew ! drown me if that’s not a plan worth coming all the way to carry out. Give me your paw, old friend,” grasping as he spoke the readily extended hand of the priest, for the Burmese, unlike their friends across the bay, despise all such ideas as pollution by the touch of others.

What a scene that cabin presented ! A Buddha priest, whose mind was conscience-seared by birth, education, and the natural errors of the human heart, leaguings with one, a Protestant by birth, a native of

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a land flooded with the light of true religion ; these two joining heart, mind, and hand in a plot of villany, perchance of bloodshed.

When the cementing grasp was concluded, Grasper exclaimed, "One thing, friend Phongis, I don't exactly agree to, and that's putting it all on the back of the young fellow. No, strand me if I do ! Let's have fair play. Keep the young chap out of the scrape ; I don't know him ; and as for that, I don't want to ; but fair play's my maxim."

But the priest was not to be foiled. He saw he could satisfy his own ends, and further his master the Seredan's, by throwing the blame on the youth, and therefore plied his golden wedge to the captain's weakly grounded scruples with vigour.

"What matter about the youth ? He is a traitor, and accursed by Buddha. Our god must be appeased. Shall this friendless boy hinder us from being rich ? Once in our good Seredan's care, it matters not what is said of him ; it cannot injure him. Think of the wealth, good captain ; while men are toiling hard and gaining little, we shall climb the golden hill by an easier and shorter way, and laugh at our poor short-sighted brethren. Shall this strange youth, this despised renegade, hinder us ?"

Under these temptations Grasper could not maintain his ground. At best it was but shifting sand, and what wonder that the rising flood, which swayed this man of dark deeds, should remove his foothold from under him. The citadel, already undermined and shattered, soon fell to the ground.

"Well, let it be so," said he; "make all the arrangements, and I'll have the lugger at the spot you will choose."

Thus ended their plans, and, draining his grog glass, the smuggler preceded the priest to the deck. A small canoe towing astern was hauled up alongside; the priest, again folded in his mantle, slid down the vessel's side, pushed off his frail bark, and with a few vigorous strokes of his short paddle shot out into the stream, and was lost to view in the darkness, for the moon had gone down.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MOMIEN.

THE eastern branch of the Irrawaddy river, from its mouth to Rangoon town, possesses no remarkable feature of grandeur or beauty. It is a noble river, but the land on both sides is low, and covered with dense jungle and short forest trees; it is indented also with numerous romantic creeks. The river is broad and winding, and at about twenty miles from its mouth is divided into two great branches, one going northward into the heart of Burmah, and the other tending in a westerly direction. At the division the land forms a small peninsula, on which, a little on the north bank of the western branch, the ancient town of Rangoon stood, and the modern one now stands.

Hitherto we have seen ancient Rangoon dimly by moonlight, but opportunities will offer as we progress to view it more particularly.

Passing along the western branch of Rangoon river for about three miles, it again bends to the north,

and just around the bend we come upon the village of Kemmendine. What it is now I know not, but at the date of this tale it was a mere collection of huts rudely made, at some distance from the river-side, between which the land is low and swampy. Kemmendine is flanked by dense jungles, and in the rear rises a commanding hill covered with thick forests.

The village, humble in appearance, is nevertheless a place of some importance. The inhabitants, in common with all river-side and sea-coast villagers and townsmen, man and equip a long gilded war-canoe, in readiness to obey the summons to war, whenever it should sound.

Kemmendine also boasts a fort, or more properly, a stockade, in which live the small band of Burmese warriors already mentioned by the priest to Captain Grasper as being headed by the disliked Aungua. This fort is of little importance, for Rangoon is the principal port and place of defence, that town being guarded by a sixteen-gun battery. The stockade of Kemmendine is on the hill, but in the village itself is another fort, chiefly for foot soldiers and the residence of native officers.

From Kemmendine a rude track stretches across the hill and through the jungle to Rangoon; it is

rude in every sense, and seldom traversed by any but horsemen, who like to get as expeditiously through the dangers of the high-grown grass and reeds as their active animals can carry them ; for the jungle contains fierce beasts and dangerous snakes, and scarcely less dangerous men.

Around the fort in the village cluster several well-built teak-wood houses, raised on piles as a preparation for the flooding of the river, and consequent swamping of the land. These houses, the residences of merchants who trade largely at Rangoon, and who go thither generally by water, are rather tastefully built, of two stories in height, the upper one surrounded by a balcony ; they stand in neat gardens. Further still in the rear of the village are scattered other wood-built houses ; and one embedded in trees is the dwelling of the principal merchant and native magistrate of Kemmendine, in truth, the old Mon-chaboo with whom the reader is already acquainted.

Collected between the first and last mentioned houses are numerous fragile-looking huts built of bamboo crossed and tied together ; the flooring covered with rude mats, and the sides covered with a like material—mats sown together. These huts are

also raised on piles, being entered by short steps or bamboo ladders of a very primitive construction.

Interspersed with these bamboo domiciles are some rough wooden huts, also on piles. Most unpicturesque and complexing are these houses grouped together.

A faint appearance of a main street is perceived running parallel with the river, but it is a most irregular one. In this street is a small temple containing images of Guadama for worship; near it is a "kyoung," or residence of the priests, which is also the national school.

With all this Kemmendine is alive with activity. In the wide street we see Burmese women sitting at low stalls, vending various articles; and at one side under a low-roofed shed, covering a large space of ground, are other vendors attending their wares; this place being a small attempt at a bazaar or market. The sellers are females; and they sit or rather squat on their benches, being surrounded by their various articles of food or ornament. Men and children roam the streets, and on the river-side are moored canoes, whilst others are lightly skimming on the Irrawaddy, some laden with fruits, and paddled by females, others conveying passengers.

The Burmese men are of short stature, but very stiff built. Their features are coarse and repulsive. Their colour is a reddish brown or copper colour. The costume consists generally of a dusky-coloured, tartan-striped cloth called a "putsi," wrapped around the waist and thighs; sometimes this is allowed to fall down to the ankles like a skirt, but more often it is rolled up around the waist. From the waist to the knees they are all tattooed with representations of animals and other figures prettily designed, giving them the appearance of having a pair of variegated drawers on. Some wear a short white jacket, but in lieu of this one end of the putsi is thrown over the shoulders. The head-dress is a coloured cloth rolled around the head like a turban, and entwined with the hair, which the men allow to grow to their waists, and this is generally jet black. Sometimes the hair is rolled into one large lump at one side of the head, and being covered with the cloth, has a very peculiar appearance. The other parts of the body are uncovered, and they have seldom either whiskers or moustache. The higher classes of men, in addition to the putsi, wear a loose, long white muslin coat with sleeves, and regular turbans. This,

with the title displaying umbrella and betel-boxes, completes the costume of a Burmese gentleman.

The females are also of short figure, very fair, with flat noses, compressed in childhood. Their costume is a short chemise, tied tightly under the breasts, and covered with a loose white jacket, long sleeved, and descending to the waist. A long strip of coloured cloth—with the gentry made of rich silks and called a “tameing,”—is rolled tightly around the waist and legs, reaching to their ankles and sometimes lower. This garment, like a skirt in appearance, is so small in circumference at the bottom that the ladies are obliged to move with a side-long walk ; it is also so scanty in width, that it just encircles the waist once, and in walking part of one leg is often exposed. Their hair is jet black, and tastefully combed back, formed into a knot behind, and oftentimes decorated with shells and bright flowers. A rich scarf, crossed over the breast, passing under the arms, and the ends allowed to flow behind, completes the walking attire of the more respectable females.

Both sexes carry umbrellas of a similar kind to those used by the Chinese, and all are inveterate



smokers. The cigars are indeed somewhat stupendous: tobacco leaves, sprinkled with sugar and dust of sandal-wood, rolled up and covered with a bright green palm-leaf, forming a cigar of six inches in length and about three inches in circumference. Men, women, and children are all inveterate smokers; and when not in use, the soothing weed is carried in a tube, sometimes of gold, fixed in the enlarged lobe of the ear.

Another habit is noticeable, that of chewing a small piece of uteka nut with a betel leaf, smeared with chunam, which is a peculiar pinkish paste. This ingredient soon stains the teeth and lips of the chewer a delicate pink, which increases to a dark red, and then the teeth become black and decay. This habit is also common with old and young of both sexes; and, indeed, on visiting a Burmese house, these are the *refreshments* invariably laid before the comer.

It is highly amusing to witness the meeting of two Burmese friends. After the first salutation, out comes the leaf, with its accompanying nut and chunam, and a quiet, friendly chew is the result.

As to habits, the Burmese are clean, the females remarkably so, but the men are indolent. Fun,

frolic, and mischief seem their prevailing characteristics. The men are careless in work, because their chieftains are exacting, and the Emperor, with his taxes of war, seldom leaves much for his oppressed subjects to enjoy.

And now let us hasten through the village, for the sun has passed the meridian, and is far down towards the jungle land in the west.

The forest trees and tall jungle grass press closely upon the village, as if with the intent to choke it entirely. The rude track or road leaving Kemendine enters a clump of trees and winds up the hill towards the stockade. Standing within the shadow of this forest group, and hid from any but a searching gaze, is a youthful Burman. His height is not more than five feet eight inches, but he is tall for his race, and of a slender but active frame, with bold flashing eyes. His hair is black and waving, but of moderate length, reaching only to his shoulders; and on his upper lip a small black moustache is seen. His features are extremely pleasing, although partaking slightly of the national broadness. In costume he differs but little from other of his countrymen; but in addition to the *putsi*, he has a long thick *tartan* robe or scarf thrown over his

shoulders, leaving his arms and legs bare. A light turban is his head-dress.

This youth (for he is but twenty years of age) has a wholly different and superior look to his countrymen in general. Determined, but yet gentle are his looks, as he leans against a tree with one hand resting on the hilt of a short curved sword at his side, whilst he eagerly scans the pathway leading from the village, as waiting for some long-expected person; anon, his eyes essay to pierce the fast deepening shadows around, and his ears are bent in anxious listening, and again, with eyes fixed upon the ground, his face betrays gleams of deep and happy thought.

Hark! a rustling sound startles him from his reverie, but native cautiousness makes him wary. A form is seen coming hastily up the path. The sun has just gone down, but there is light enough to reveal a female figure enveloped and her face almost hid in a large shawl.

A smile of delighted recognition flashes across the watcher's face, and as the comer enters the copse he springs lightly to her side.

"Domea!" "Aungua!" are simultaneously ex-

claimed. The recognition is complete, and the lovers, for such they are, affectionately embrace and kiss.

"Dear Aungua, I fear I have kept you waiting, for your poor little bird could not escape before ; but now I am with you once more, and we shall be happy."

"The time seemed long, Domea," returned the youth, "but I have thought of thee ; thought of good Momien, and the wonders he has told us ; thought of blessed Jesus, and the happiness we shall have when together and unmolested we can worship Him. I have also had sad thoughts, Domea. Dear one, something presses on my mind, clouding my prospects, I know not why. This coming war will separate us, and I feel a dread to leave you behind. Something is telling me of coming danger. I feel unstrung ; a cracking branch or footfall of an animal causes me to start. Nay, I am almost a coward."

"Oh, Aungua, do not dwell on them," said the gentle Domea, and she clung to his side in fear, as they now trod briskly on the way from the village up the winding path, which alternately wound through forest groups and open spaces—"this separation will chill us and make us sad. What will your poor Domea do when you are away? No Aungua to

make me happy ; and oh, my own love, this war !” Here the sweet-toned voice trembled, and Domea’s head bent as the tears fell.

Seeing his companion’s grief, the youth roused himself to better thoughts and brighter hopes ; and striving to soothe her alarm, he said, “There, Domea, be cheered ; I am so now. Our Father in heaven will make even this cloud pour down blessings upon us. Dear one, we need not fear. I am too often sad. It is my nature, and these things tend to increase it, but my faith is undimmed. All will be well. God is our helper, soon our hearts’ desires will be granted, and we shall leave these sad and heart-distressing scenes for a purer air, and there live and love, being blessed with the smiles of Jesus.”

“Aungua, it is so,” and the little trembler wiped away her tears, and could we but have seen through the mistiness, we should have noticed her large black eyes glancing up to her lover, the rays of joy sparkling through her tears like the gleams of the morning sun sporting with the dewdrops. “Yes, it is so, my Aungua, and I am the coward. These things are good, but, oh, our poor natures see it not, although our hearts, under God’s tuition, yield assent. With good Momien to advise us, we will talk of these

things to-night, and we will hope soon to need no more such stealthy meetings. Ah, Aungua, my father is no father, his wife no mother to me ; all are alien to me now, and I have none but you. And yet my father was fond and kind when we were children, and fond of you, too, Aungua, but now his frequent journeys to Rangoon have chilled his love."

"It is true, Domea, and we have much to say to-night, and much to confer on. Tell me, love, how have you been, and what done since our last meeting?"

After giving him a detailed account of herself and doings, Domea inquired in return how it had fared with him.

"I have but one thing of interest, dear one," said he. "You remember my speaking of Berhing, he whom I once rescued from death?"

"Oh, yes," replied Domea, "I well remember your friend and companion : but what of him?"

"Well, but a few days ago I went to Rangoon, to know where my troops should be in readiness for the expedition to the South, and lo ! I met Berhing, whom I have not seen for some length of time. We conversed of old days, and I found him still the daring, fearless, careless being as of old. He has become a

powerful chief, and many bold men serve him on the mountains, where he lives by hunting. With all this, his heart is unchanged, and he desired me to repair to his domain and live with him ; but, dear Domea, he knew not what strong cords bind me here."

"Oh, no, Aungua, go not with him ; he is too fierce, but yet he loves you as a brother. But, see, here is Momien's house."

Their walk had been brief, for the old man's house was but slightly removed from the village, and during the day this now lonely path was much frequented.

From the spot where Momien's house stands we have a view of the river and village when day enriches the world.

The house itself is humble ; low, and wood built, thatched with leaves of the large cocoa-nut palm kind. The old man is at his door to welcome his expected visitors, and a smile plays over the hoary pilgrim's face as he gives them hearty greeting. "Hail, my children ! and welcome. 'Tis like with me as with some of those bright orbs above us, night is my sweetest time."

Leading the way, Momien walked into a small but comfortable apartment, and a vessel, or lamp, containing a mimic sea of cocoanut oil in which

floated lighted wicks, shed a light over the room from a small table, on which was placed an open book, wherein doubtless the aged host had been reading. It was the Bible in English characters—Momien knows the language well.

Throwing off her shawl, Domea displayed a sweet and fair face and large sparkling eyes. Her rich black hair was combed neatly back, and entwined in it were some sweet-scented orange-blossoms of the champae flower. Her dress differed much from the native style. No tight, ungainly 'tameing' impeded her progress, but over her clean white jacket a long rich cloth of blue crossed her right shoulder and under her left arm, and was rolled around her waist and legs in the fashion of a 'tameing,' but loose and graceful. No large cigar tube disfigured her tiny ears, but small gold rings were there. Her teeth were untainted and unstained by the chunam and betel-nut.

Aungua's form and features were also displayed to greater advantage. Taking off his turban, one shake of the head caused his fine, short and wavy hair to fall gracefully over his neck, and he seated himself by Domea's side whilst the old man ordered in fruit to refresh them.

Momien claims a few words of description from us.



His costume was strikingly different from that of the people among whom he lived. If the reader has ever travelled to the island of Japan, he might there have seen, worn by the natives, similar loose coloured trousers and a coloured tunic, confined to the waist by a girdle, as that now worn by Momien. His hair was white and venerable. In spite of age—for he was full sixty years old—vigour and strength were still apparent, and the old pilgrim's face, marked with furrows of time and thought, beamed with happiness and peace.

How sweet, how noble, how venerable is age when hallowed by the light of a truly Christian life. The step may grow feebler, the voice more tremulous, the eyes dim, and the ears heavy, but within the soul gathers strength day by day; and as the old, shattered, storm-tossed tabernacle falls into ruins—the soul bursts forth in all her strength and beauty to wing a happy flight to her heavenly home.

The life and character of the old pilgrim Momien were varied and full of interest. In early life he entered the priesthood of Shoodagon, and became initiated in the mysteries of Buddhism; but Momien had a spirit that yearned after the TRUTH. There is a yearning within the breast of every one, be they peasant or peer, rural or regal, which impels us to

search after the truth whilst we know it not. Ever seeking for "rest," the soul wanders amid ten thousand varied paths, chasing butterfly phantoms and grasping crumbling treasures. Restlessness! yearning! change! is stamped on all men of all classes. Like the wanderer from his home, although his eye is enchanted and his senses pleased with varied scenes, still it seeks home, and nought but home can give it rest.

It was so with Momien, but in a greater measure perhaps than with many men. His religion boasted of being the way to rest; he tried it, but it failed. Meni's smiling hills afforded but little joy to his yearning soul. Often did he strive to check the sacrilegious thought, that stocks and stones could aid him not, but as often would rise.

These ceaseless yearnings grew apace, and Momien beheld first with trembling doubt, then with firm distrust, and finally with strong dislike, the shallow practices and acted lies of the Buddhist priesthood. *Alone*, he dared not reveal his thoughts, for that would have been madness, and he knew not where to seek and find help or sympathy.

Was this not the Spirit of God within the youthful priest, leading him to a purer and a better faith?

Momien could no longer share the priestly deceptions, and one morning his post was deserted.

A solitary traveller he wandered over many miles, sojourning here and there for great length of time, but still no easier at heart. Rest he found not, although the inward yearnings increased. Foiled and disappointed Momien wandered to the island of Japan, and there finding the Buddhist religion prevalent, he once more entered its priesthood. Time passed on, and his mind found employment in the sciences and languages then known and studied by the priests.

In the treasures of his pagoda he found some old and time-eaten manuscripts. They had probably lain there many hundred years, and who shall say they were not some of the warblings of the sweet Psalmist of Israel? Like Luther did Momien ponder over these treasures; ah, they were indeed treasures. They spoke in unmistakeable language of the one true God; of life hereafter; of punishment for evil, and reward for good. They taught man's origin and his relationship to God; man's sin and God's mercy.

Strange and thrilling words these for Momien! In his despair and hopelessness succour arrived. His soul was led to thoughts new and exalting, but still

all was confused—nothing definite. He saw more clearly the fallacy of worshipping Buddha, and he perceived a new way to rest and happiness, but as yet he perceived not the gate. The bright light at the entrance shone dimly through nature's fog, but the light was there. Leaving the pagoda, therefore, the seeker after he scarce knew what, strove to be free from the trammels and pernicious influence of his priestly brethren. Momien had now reached his thirtieth year, and he turned his footsteps, as restless as the legendary Wandering Jew, towards the mainland.

Wandering, as if led by his roaming mind, he was nevertheless led by the Spirit of God, and came to a small village that stood calm and sheltered on the north bank of the beautiful Soungari river, which waters the fertile and Eden-like plain to the north of China. Our wanderer had not been long located here when, by a strange accident, two European missionaries, filled with love of God and man, found their way to this spot and preached glad tidings to the inhabitants. The seed those noble men so liberally broadcast fell on prejudiced minds, and the hearers received the good news with scoffs and scorn. Not so Momien. He heard the missionaries with an entranced soul.

Words that he had read in his old manuscripts were now sounding in his ears, and he saw their meaning in a clearer light. Richer truths were proclaimed. Jesus and Him crucified was preached.

The reader may well imagine how anxiously Momien listened, and how he devoured these things. He followed the good men to their hut: told them his longings, and that for more than ten years he had sought in vain to reach a surer way to happiness; he told them also of the manuscripts in the old pagoda. To be brief, Momien heard and received gladly the words of eternal life, and he became a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

The converted priest remained with the missionaries for some time, until the inhabitants, incited by their jealous priests, wickedly murdered those who sought to do them good; but Momien escaped their wrath, and became a pilgrim in every sense, for he journeyed over Central Asia, and even reached the civilized and powerful nations of the West. This he did for the space of nearly ten years.

About twenty years after the disappearance of the young priest from Shoodagon, a man of forty years of age, travel-stained and weary, entered the town of Rangoon, and making his way towards the old pagoda

seemed to look with familiar eye upon its majestic pinnacles and temples. It was Momien. His wanderings had brought him to his native soil, and to the well-remembered sanctuary, but now how changed his prospects and his thoughts !

Devoting himself to a task of love and self-denial Momien took up his abode at the little village of Kemmendine, in the very house we now find him ; and here he passed his time, not concealing his change of religion, and not obtruding it unwisely on his countrymen. He knew their fanaticism and devotion to idolatry, and that few ever change ; but Momien knew also that the Burmese are remarkably careless in the performance of religious duties, and worship by proxy through the medium of the priests, to save themselves the trouble. Hence our old friend saw a better prospect of success in winning the hearts of the young. In this he succeeded, and scarcely a day passed but little groups could be seen gathered around the good old man, listening to his teaching, and telling him their troubles ; for they were never wearied of hearing the sweet tales the old pilgrim would relate from the Bible, and he never turned a deaf ear to their tales of sorrow and childish disappointment.

Momien was loved by many ; feared by none ; but hated by his old brethren of Shoodagon.

Amongst his little companions were two children, for whom the old man early evinced a fatherly love. One was a boy, an orphan boy, under the care of an old warrior chief ; the other a girl, the constant companion of the parentless lad, and she was the daughter of a rich merchant. These two grew up, played, roamed and learned together, for the merchant loved them both. But as they advanced in years Momien saw the seeds of truth springing above their heart's soil, and our little friends were as strangers in their own land, aliens in their own homes, for they renounced their old religion, and gave to the newer and better, and thereby drew upon themselves the hatred and scorn of their nearest relatives. One in religion, they were also one in love.

The reader will divine the rest. Here, in the little apartment, is the old Momien, full sixty years of age, and here also are our young friends, now the manly Aungua, and the womanly Domea ; each loving and reverencing Momien as their own father and their only human friend.

## CHAPTER V.

## HOPEFUL PLANS.

AFTER a frugal repast of fruit the venerable Momien seated himself by the side of his youthful friends, and inquiring after their welfare, "Well, my children, tell me," he said, "how you have fared since our last meeting. We must talk seriously to-night, and devise some plan of escaping these threatened dangers."

"I have only the same tale to tell," replied Domea; "my father persists in his intention of giving me to Munris Maywoon, and he is still unkind, nay, even more so, than before. He is enraged against us all; against Aungua and you, good Momien, because we worship not stocks and stones. I am quite unhappy there; my step-mother is cruel and harsh, and were it not for the lingering love in my father's heart, I could not endure it. My poor heart often feels faint and wearied, and, had I not strength from God, I could not live."



"I know your troubles, my child," said Momien ; "it is a trying situation for one so young and so sensitive as you, but you have a loving and an all-sufficient God to flee to for strength, and to Him we must look to be brought out of these perplexities. Now, tell me, Domea, what are the plans of your father so far as you have ascertained, and then we must see how to meet them. And you, too, my noble son, you too, Aungua, must tell me how you have prospered."

"I have gleaned nothing," said Domea, "beyond that my father will insist on giving me to Munris as his wife ; but I imagine, from his quietness now, that he will not attempt this until after the attack on Junkseylon."

"I do not think he will," broke in Aungua. "Munris Maywoon must accompany our Boa with the army, and he cannot be at liberty until the expedition has returned. In the meanwhile, we have ample time to plan and carry out our intentions."

"Doubtless you have conjectured rightly," rejoined Momien ; "then we may call this certain, that we have time to act until the termination of the war ; but in the meanwhile, my children, I cannot but think that means will be taken to prevent our meetings.

Monchaboo, although magistrate of Kemmendine, dare not interfere with me, but he may use his influence with the Boa, or with the commander of the forces, to remove you, Aungua, or he may keep our gentle Domea confined at home, and so prevent our meeting, and hinder the furtherance of our plans."

"Oh, Aungua, if it should be so," said Domea, pressing closer to her lover's side, and gazing into his eyes whilst her own filled with tears.

"Dear one," replied he, "this may not be so, but it is right to keep out of danger, and the suggestions of good Momien must be remembered. Hitherto we have been very fortunate in our meetings."

"That, I have no doubt," said Momien, "is the result of Monchaboo's confidence in his own plans, and in his feeling secure in the idea that we cannot well escape from Kemmendine; but at any moment his mind may become suspicious, and our plans thwarted."

"It is very strange," said Aungua, "but for the past few days some cloudy feeling has been shading my spirits, as if presaging coming danger. You remember, my own Domea, that I told you this."

"Yes," replied she; "but I think it may be caused

by your anxiety about me ; struggle against these sad thoughts," more speaking to the old man.

"Yes, my daughter, that is doubtless the cause ; but we must not neglect these inward warnings, for oftentimes they are true presages of coming danger. It is true, we have generally ourselves to thank for our little troubles and shadows, just as the sunshine comes from above, independent of earth, and the clouds arise from below intercepting the sun's rich warmth, so in like manner the sunshine in our hearts cometh down from God, the giver of all good gifts, but the clouds that give us grief and trouble proceed from our earthly and corrupt hearts, although in wisdom our Lord permits our skies to be thus clouded ; still, I believe that oftentimes we have inward warnings of coming troubles. But to our subject more directly : when will the army march, Aungua ?"

"Rumour states in a few weeks, and, indeed, I am ordered to convey my band to Martaban in a few days, where the main body of the fleet and army will assemble. Indeed, at Rangoon now, as you know, many katoos and canoes are gathered. It is also said that the English vessel will accompany us ; and if so,

will prove an admirable aid ; but you see we have little time to work in."

"True," exclaimed Momien ; "and I can see two plans for us to adopt : they are bold, but necessary."

"What are they ?" asked the eager young soldier. "I care not how dangerous ; we can overcome all difficulties with the help of God, and Domea, I know, though weak, has a stout heart."

"Yes, indeed, dear Aungua, stout when with you, but a coward when away from you."

The old man smiled to see the affection of his young pupils ; it was a smile of approval and delight, and he said—

"The two plans are these ; or, more properly, it is one plan with two ways of carrying it out. It is this : With Monchaboo's desire to marry Domea to Munris, and his hatred to our religion, combined with his proud heart, and also the instigation of his brother, the high-priest of Shoodagon ; with all these we cannot expect to gain his consent to your union—that were madness. Our religion alone is enough to make us despised and rejected, even as our blessed Master was. Again, poor Domea now has really no home ; her father's heart is estranged, and her step-

mother cruel. Had your own mother been alive, my child, perhaps things would be brighter. Nay, my poor Domea," continued he, seeing his gentle pupil was affected by his allusion to her dead mother; "nay, my poor Domea, cheer your heart; these thoughts are saddening, but we must look above for strength. We cannot then remain here. I say *we* cannot, because where my charges go, there must I go likewise to watch over you. I have no settled home; this old dwelling has many, many sweet recollections to make it dear to me, but I have no wife, no children, no relatives which make the home; none to care for but you, and you are both to me as children in the Lord." A sweet smile stole over the old pilgrim's face as he uttered this. He continued: "Seeing these things, I should propose that we all remove from Kemmendine, and go far away to some——"

"Oh, Momien," broke in Domea, "how can I leave my poor father! With all his wealth, he is poor, for he knows not God. He is harsh and unnatural, but he is a father still, and for the sake of his poor darkened soul, how can I leave him?"

"Nay, my daughter, hear me to the end. It is a deep struggle for you, my child, but I will advise only as I feel God will bless."

"Yes, my own Domea," spake Aungea, striving to wipe away her tears: "let us hear good Momien through. We shall have a sea of trouble to pass through, but we shall be strengthened. Proceed, good father."

"I was proposing" said the old Christian, "that we go away to some distant spot; I know many where we could live and worship unmolested, and perchance, dear daughter, your father's heart will relent at your absence, and we shall be summoned back in peace."

Domea's eyes brightened at this cheering speech, but she remained silent as her aged adviser continued—

"This is my plan; and now for the two ways of carrying it out. I am as yet undecided whether it is better for Domea and myself to proceed to the intended place, and you Aungua to join us after the expedition, all being well; or, if we shall *all* go at once, you giving up the war—for I cannot think duty calls you there. I must confess I wish us all to go together. You are young, strong, and bold, and I but old and not so vigorous as in days gone by, and the journey is dangerous whether by land or water. Which shall it be?"

This conversation had been chiefly addressed to Aungua, who replied—"It is a bold plan, but a good one. I, too, wish all to travel in company, but my duty bids me stay until the Boa releases me from my oath of service. Go away we must. What else can we do? Dear Domea, your father will soon relent, and if we remain it will be misery for you and danger for me. Can we do otherwise?"

"No, Aungua, it is hard, but I see no other way. My poor father; what will become of him; but to go with you I can even give him up." Poor Domea loved truly, but duty and love struggled hard within her heart until it beat with great rapidity, and her sweet face was streaming with tears. But love conquered at last, and she rested her head on Aungua's shoulder whilst he did his best to soothe her—for never did two love so truly, so fondly, or sympathize so together, as Aungua and Domea. Again her large eyes were lifted to her lover's face, and with eager tones she said: "You must go with us also, Aungua; I cannot go without you. Nay," she continued, laughingly amid her tears, putting her hand on his mouth to prevent the answer she saw coming, "Nay, no answer; I wish you to, and I am sure Momien will

say your Christian duty does not demand you to go to the war."

"Domea has spoken correctly," said Momien: "I do not hesitate, my son, in saying it is right for you to leave the army. Look at this case. The emperor, through love of power, merges every consideration for his subjects, and projects this war against an unoffending neighbour. Your heart naturally longs to join the fight, but it is an unjust, an unholy war. You had as well turn pirate on the seas, or robber on the land, as far as I can see. I have not before urged you to leave your troop, because no war has called you forth of late, but now dearer interests are at stake, Domea's happiness and life—and can you hesitate?"

Aungua did not. Momien's superior judgment had removed all doubts of the righteousness of the act, and besides, did not Domea wish it? To Aungua this was motive enough; but she never could wish and he dared not comply, even though she could, where his new faith said no! Both striving to be each other's spiritual as well as bodily helper, they avoided such collision, but in this present case Domea saw with clearer vision than Aungua, hence his hesitation, for whatever Domea wished it was his delight to obey.



"And now, my children, we have much to do and think about, but I must not let you remain longer," continued Momien.

"What, then, shall we decide on as our plan?" asked Aungua.

"Let it be this. We will pray for guidance, and to-night I will settle upon the place of our destination and the means of escape. By land or by water the dangers are equally great, but I must weigh their respective advantages and make a choice. We must meet again in a few nights, as soon as possible, and then indeed settle everything. But now, my children, we will together ask for divine guidance, and then part."

Good old Momien's gray hairs were so many locks of glory.

After pouring out their hearts before the throne of grace in prayer, the little party rose to separate. Aungua wrapped his beloved up warmly in her shawl, and they stepped out into the open air. The moon was up, but oftentimes clouded.

"Good night, my children, and may our Father above bless you! Let us meet again in a few nights."

"Good night, good Momien," and as the lovers

briskly trod down the path, the old pilgrim stood watching their receding forms.

Talking in a low tone, they hastened down the pathway, little suspecting an eavesdropper was near. It was so! As the youthful couple sped along, a dark form, folded in a mantle which completely veiled his features, glided lightly from tree to tree tracking their footsteps.

More than once the quick ear of Domea heard the cracking of a branch and rustling of leaves, as the unknown trod on them, and as often did Aungua pause and glance around, with one hand on his trusty sword, but nothing was to be seen or heard beyond the usual sounds at night, and they continued their way until they reached the clump of trees already noticed as their meeting place. Here they paused in its shadow.

"Dear Domea," said Aungua, "let us say our parting words here, for we must be silent in nearing your home lest we are heard. Be stout-hearted, my own Domea, for my sake, and we shall soon be away from this sad place."

"I shall be happy now, dearest," said she; "for have you not promised not to go to the war? We shall meet again soon, shall we not?"

"Yes, my own Domea, God willing, we shall ; and I think, nay, I know, we can find a friend in Berhing to help us in our journey if we go by land. He is daring, and will gladly help me for old companion sake. I shall see him before we meet again."

"Oh, that will indeed be good for us. He could protect us so well. But when shall we meet? I cannot let you keep away long from me."

As she uttered this, the unknown watcher drew nearer with stealthy step, and getting behind the very tree against which the lovers stood, ventured so close, and peered his head so near to them, that had he not kept his lips tightly compressed, they must have felt his warm breath on their necks. With eagerness he waited the reply of Aungua.

"Dear one, can I remain away long from you? Let us meet here as before, in three nights from this. Ah ! what is that !"

Eagerness had made the unknown lean forward so much, that his body almost overbalanced itself, and, to save himself, he placed one foot in advance, which trod on a dry branch, and the creaking noise startled the lovers, and brought the exclamation from Aungua. In an instant, the listener dropped noiselessly to the ground, and lay, a dark mass,

hidden in the shadow of the copse. Aungua looked around in vain; nothing suspicious could be seen, but Domea being too timid to remain, they left the wood, and silently walked towards the maiden's home in the village.

As they receded from view in the distance, the cause of their alarm rose from the ground, and stepping into the open path, his mantle fell off his head, revealing the fierce eyes and repulsive features of the priest we have already seen on board the brigantine.

"In three nights! three nights!" he muttered; "yes, *we* will meet in three nights, but after that, *you* shall meet *never!*" and he plunged into the thicket, and disappeared.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE GATHERING STORM.

THE three nights have passed, and we find Captain Grasper pacing the deck of his vessel, in company with the old boatswain. The night is dark and clouded; the men on the watch are right forward, whilst the smuggler captain and his old companion are walking across the deck abaft the mainmast.

"What time do we start, cap'n?" said the boatswain.

"At four bells, Murdoch."

"Have the lugger, cap'n? She's rather heavy, I guess, for this light wind."

"No," said Grasper. "I did think of using her, but now we'll take the two quarter boats well manned; they are lighter, and we shall have to use oars; there's no wind for sails. As the tide begins to slacken, we'll start."

"It's a stunnin' run for us, Cap'n Harry; puts me

in mind of old days, when the old skipper used to do a few such things—that's when you was a youngster. Ah! you can't recollect so far back as that, but I can mind many a time, when you was a little piccaninny, I have rolled you in my old jacket, and put you in the stern of the boat, whiles we ran cargoes. Ah! old skipper and I have had many a spree together, and I well remember the last run he ever had, poor old skip. 'Bill,' says he to me, when we got him in the cave, and his wounds bleeding that we couldn't keep the life in him; 'Bill,' says he, 'take care of the boy Harry. Look after him, and keep him out of harm, and don't desert him.' That's what your father said, Cap'n Harry, and ain't I done it, eh?"

"You have, old friend," cried the smuggler, grasping the old seaman's hand, and giving it a hearty wring; "you have, indeed. I cannot look back so far as that very clearly, but I fancy I can recal some of those scenes a little; but those we have passed together since my father's death are clear enough."

"Ay, ay, cap'n, we've had many a spree, and good ones too, I reckon, together; and this one won't be the worst, I hope. But, Cap'n Harry, how'll

you manage about the priest's share—give it him, eh?"

"As for that," replied Grasper, "the fellow deserves a good share for his trouble; but all the cash and valuables, as well as the young fellow, will be on board here for some days, until the affair is a little hushed up."

"And do you intend, cap'n," said the boatswain, lowering his voice, "do you intend to let him carry it away? Hang me if I would! What's the odds about an old yellor-coated priest? He ought to be ashamed of himself to do such things, he ought; and just to sarve him out, I would keep every cent, if I was you."

"Let's have fair play, Murdoch," replied the captain, but with a smile at the old tar's indignation at the priest's villany; "the fellow works, and he ought to be paid; but, after all, as you say, it does seem a pity to let it go after it's once aboard."

"In course it is a pity, Cap'n Harry, and a shame, I thinks. Now, look here, cap'n; ain't we been working hard, these many years, and sich a chance ain't to be got every day. You wants to leave this part of the old ball, only must have a pick out of

the war. Now, just take Bill Murdoch's advice, and when the pongee comes for his share, swear black's white, and say you never saw the money, or know nothing at all about the affair, or that his brain is turned. If he kicks, we'll heave him overboard and give him a swim; he won't say nothing about it ashore, take my word for that, and that won't injure our credit 'mong the darkies, 'cause they won't know it."

"You're right, Bill," said Grasper, who always saw clearly when the golden lamp shone upon his path: "you're right again, and I'll do it: but now it's time to be off. Pipe the hands up, boatswain;" and the smuggler's voice assumed a stern tone of command. All familiarity ceased, and the old blue-jacket blew a low but clear whistle on his call. The signal was understood, and the men on deck forward passed the word below, and from the companion poured out a number of men, mostly strong, stiff-built fellows, who came trooping aft.

"Now, my lads," cried the captain, "I want ten of you for each of the quarter boats." Out stepped twenty stalwart men from the crew, and among them our old friends Dan and Carlo.

"Each man take his cutlass and pistols," continued



their chief; "away with you, lads," and the men moved off to arm themselves.

"Lower away the boats both sides," continued Grasper to the remainder of his crew, who obeyed his orders exactly, and the quarter boats were soon riding on the water, hauled up on one side, with the crew for each boat in readiness on deck, awaiting orders to man them.

The brigantine's boats were large, but smart-looking things, and made for rough, quick work.

"Over the side, lads," cried the captain to the crews, himself equipped for the expedition. The men slid over and seated themselves, ten in each boat, and held their oars in readiness.

Turning to the mate, "Keep a sharp look-out, Davis," Grasper said, "and you may expect us in about three hours. Now, boatswain, take one, and I the other." With these last words the captain and his old guardian were speedily in their respective boats. Away they shoved, with their bows up the stream, and, propelled by ten oars a-piece, they shot swiftly across the river to the jungle side. The smuggler's reason for this was to escape observation, by creeping along the shore. However, there was little fear of this, for the night was dark and gloomy, and the

flood tide, although almost spent, made their progress rapid. Up to this moment not a word had been spoken but by the captain, with the exception of the responsive "Ay, ay, sir!" of the crew. Swiftly the well-manned boats glided through the water, the captain's being followed by the boatswain's. The steady movement of the oars in the rowlocks made but little noise, and nought disturbed the stillness of the night except the gurgling of the water in their wake, or the splash as each boat, almost lifted out of the smooth water by the long and vigorous strokes of the rowers, sank again into the stream, like birds cleaving the air.

Thus the smugglers pursued their course until they neared the bend of the river, and now the captain's voice was heard in low tones. "Steady rowing, all!" The order was likewise heard by the boatswain, and both boats slackened their speed.

"Avast rowing," said the captain; and obedient to the command, the men ceased pulling and lay upon their oars, whilst the tide drifted them very slowly still up the river.

"Show the light there forward, lads," uttered the smuggler chief, still in a low but firm voice, and from the bows of his boat the rays of a bull's-eye lantern

were turned towards the land. Slowly they drifted and slowly did the time pass, but still the light shone clearly over the water ; but why, none, save the captain, knew. His men whispered together, and this soon increased to low murmuring conversation about their project. " Silence, all !" in a gruff, stern voice, made every tongue cease, and a dead silence ensued. Now could be heard faint sounds coming through the darkness ; the low rapid splash of a paddle in the water sounding nearer and nearer. Something was approaching rapidly, and suddenly it loomed in the darkness, and a light canoe, with a solitary occupant, shot alongside the captain's boat, almost startling with its suddenness the watching smuggler himself. By the glare of the lantern, might be seen the same fierce eyes and repulsive countenance we have noticed twice before ; it is the native priest who holds on to the boat's gunwale with one hand as he converses with Grasper.

" Douse the glim, lads," cried the captain, and all was darkness again. " Now, my friend," continued Grasper, leaning over to the priest in his canoe alongside, " are we in time ? "

" Yes, captain," replied the native, " in good time ; but we must hasten on shore, and make for the wood.

My plan is to wait until the youth returns with his mistress : he will pass through the wood, but will return again, as he must sleep at the stockade on the hill. As he returns alone we can seize him ; not before, as the maiden might give the alarm, and we must not touch her ; then we will make for the richer prize."

"You heave a-head then," said the captain, "and we will follow. Give way, men, and mind not a word is spoken by a single man Jack of you."

Away glided the light canoe, and away shot the boats once more, now steering shoreward for Kemendine. It required but few of the long, strong strokes of the crew to bring them close in. "Unship your oars—ready in the bows, there, with the painter !" and the boats grated on the sand.

Leaping out, the smugglers mustered on the shore. There they stood, twenty strong-made and determined fellows, ready for any deed of daring. All are dressed alike, in dark trousers, striped Guernsey frocks fitting close to the body, and bound by a wide belt, holding cutlass and pistols. Close-fitting, red skull-caps with long tassels complete the costume of each. Grasper surveyed them closely, and then said, turning to the old boatswain, "Murdoch, you remain

with one boat's crew, and look after the boats. Keep them afloat, and mind none of the lads leave them. If you hear a hail show the light for a second, as the night is so dark we may steer wide of the mark."

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response, and the boatswain at once divided his men into two parties, and shoved the boats into deep water, leaving the priest's canoe on the beach. "Fall in, lads," was now the chieftain's order to the remainder of his men; "and look well to your feet, and don't stick in the paddy fields. No talking, for all depends now on silence, and a rich prize will be the reward—forward!" And away moved the little band of midnight marauders, headed and guided by the priest.

The night was dark, but they managed to grope along the swampy paddy fields, while many muttered groans of displeasure (greeted with low laughs of the more fortunate) followed the many stumbles of some unlucky smuggler into the pits of water.

All else was silent. It was now past eleven; occasionally the clouds breaking, showed the way with more clearness, and after a toilsome and silent march, the captain and his men reached the skirts of the village. Passing along hastily and stealthily, they

soon fell into the little path winding up the hill, and made at once for the wood. Reaching this, the captain and priest conversed together in suppressed tones, and then, at his command, the men separated, and five on each side of the path concealed themselves in the thick underwood, waiting their prey. The smuggler and his dark-skinned companion remained behind the very tree that lately concealed the eaves-dropping priest.

Leaving them to wait like tigers for their unsuspecting prey, we will step backwards in time a few hours and forward in space a few paces, and once more enter the dwelling of Momien.

Again we find Aungua and Domea seated in the old pilgrim's room, and conversing with him. It has been a season of much anxiety for each of our three friends. Their situation is one of extreme difficulty and of great trial to poor Domea. Natural ties bind her to her father, although he is unworthy of her love. If she remains, her new religion will be always assailed, and she forced to give up the companionship of her fellow-Christians. Doubtless, Momien would be removed and Aungua destroyed as obstacles in her father's path. Aungua she loves dearer than her own parent. Has not God brought

them together in love, and smiled upon their union of hearts?

These varied and conflicting thoughts waged war in Domea's gentle heart. Who can draw the line of duty in so trying a case? It may be thought it was her duty to remain with her father, and endeavour, with God's blessing, to bear down his prejudices by her Christian meekness and perseverance; and that so he might ultimately become favourable to her marriage with Aungua. And who shall say but perhaps her so doing might be the means of enlightening her father's sin-benighted soul?

If the scales balanced equally for a moment, love soon made filial duty kick the beam. A father may be lost, but a husband will be gained; and has not our Maker blessed the union of hearts, and commanded us to leave father and mother, and cleave to one another?

But whilst we are thus weighing the matter for ourselves, our friends are deep in conversation.

"What you tell me of Berhing," said Momien, "is indeed good news, and this decides me to travel by land. The spot I have chosen is the beautiful country between the rivers Soungari and Amoor, which I have often told you of. There the people are peaceable and

friendly to strangers. Moreover, I am well acquainted with the place and manners of the people. Now my children, the journey by sea is long and dangerous; we should need a large kattoo, well manned with sailors; and we must pass through the seas of Malay and China, and skirt along the coast. But now, Aungua, you tell me of Berhing, we will proceed by land. We must penetrate through the heart of our own country, but this we can safely do; and then pass the borders of China, and enter the country inhabited by the Kirghis hordes. This route is dangerous and toilsome, and I fear me our gentle Domea will almost be unable to brook the hardship. I have no apprehension of our being molested by the tribes we pass through. Peaceable travellers will be respected, but the country abounds with ferocious animals, and we need protection. In this, Berhing and his followers will be of great advantage. Now, my dear children, let me hear your opinions."

"It is indeed a task of difficulty and danger," replied Aungua, "and, with you, I fear for Domea's strength; but we know in whom we trust, and strength will be given to us. Perhaps we may find a home nearer than we now intend. I care not



for the danger myself, but by water I see little chance of escape, as we could so easily be overtaken, And now I know not where we could find a trusty crew, unless indeed we had some of Berhing's men, but they are only warriors and not sailors. Come, Domea, help us with your counsel."

"I have little to give, dear Aungua," returned she. "Fear not for my strength or for my courage; neither will fail in time of trial. I like the journey by land, because then if my poor father relented he might overtake us."

"Well then, good Momien," said the youthful warrior, "let us decide on the land."

"Let it be so, Aungua," returned the old man. "To do this, then, you must see Berhing once more and tell him our projects, if you have not done so yet."

"No; I have said nothing to him beyond asking his aid in a bold scheme for which he is burning. I have not mentioned Domea's name or your own to him, thinking it best to be silent until our plans were matured."

"Well, that matters little," said Momien; "a few words will make him acquainted with all. But we must procure horses."

"That I can do well, and provide horses inured to mountain travels." Thus replied Aungua.

"All things seem favourable," returned Momien, "and we must meet here—take what valuables we possess, and make rapid marches inland to evade pursuit. You, Aungua, must arrange with Berhing where to meet us with his men, and we can then decide on our future course ; and protected by him, and blessed by our God, we will pursue our journey. Frequent restings and careful attention, and our gentle Domea will feel little fatigue."

"Oh, Momien ! I shall be brave enough," responded she ; "and I feel anxious to be away."

"Well then, my pupils, we shall soon bid farewell to this old house of many happy recollections ; but this is a world of change, and here we have no abiding city. I shall be your commander, and you must both submit to my orders henceforth."

"That will we most readily," exclaimed his hearers.

"To begin, then," continued Momien, "I have three orders. First, we must meet in two days hence to depart ; second, Domea must take an attendant with her ; and, lastly, my children, I deem it wise and prudent that you be lawfully married by the laws of our country before we start."

The lovers were indeed startled with this, and both simultaneously exclaimed, whilst they alternately glanced from one another to Momien, who sat smiling at their amazement,

“How can this be?”

“Well, my children, and a few words of explanation will make this clear to you. When you are united in marriage we can travel with greater safety. Marriage, you well know, is an ordination of God, and it consists of the uniting of heart and mind in holy ties of love. To preserve purity and order in our notions, the laws of the land require that such inward marriages shall be confirmed by outward ceremony, and such a law is beneficial and necessary. In our own land, all that is necessary is the sanction of the maiden’s parents, independent of her consent——”

“But,” broke in Aungua, “Domea’s father will not consent.”

“Neither do we need it, my son,” replied Momien. “Am I not Domea’s father in the Lord? Her own parent has forfeited his right of guardianship. We are now about leaving our native country to sojourn in a strange land. You become my children, and I become your guardian, and in the eyes of God you are now husband and wife. In the eyes of man my

sanction I deem lawful ; but should it be thought necessary in the country to which we go, then you can submit to their forms of marriage."

"Good Momien," replied Aungua, "I cannot but feel you have spoken the truth, and, indeed, such are the views Domea and myself have long believed ; but I know well her dear heart would be happier could she know her father smiled upon our marriage."

"Dear Aungua," said Domea, "I feel we are one in the eyes of God, but I should indeed feel happier in the knowledge that I had pleased my parent ; this, however, shall not hinder us from doing as our dear father, Momien, wishes.

"My children," said the old Christian, "with you the consent of Monchaboo would afford me more happiness ; but these things are of the Lord. Our hearts are right in His sight ; but," continued he, "before we do as I advise, let us make a final appeal to Monchaboo. You, dear daughter, can speak seriously with him, and if he relents, God grant he may, well and good ; but if not, let us follow our intended course."

"Yes, we will try this," said Domea ; "but I have no hope."

“Time wears on, and we must soon separate,” said Momien; “your attendant, my daughter?”

“You must take her, dear Domea,” also urged Aungua.

“If you think it not dangerous, dear Aungua, I will, and I think her faithful, and she will be great company.”

The time of meeting was then settled, and many hopes and fears expressed of the intended journey.

It may seem somewhat surprising that our three friends evinced so little fear respecting their escape from Kemmendine. Let it be remembered that, independent of the Burmese native daring, Momien had travelled much, and Aungua, a bold young warrior, was inured to danger, whilst Domea also possessed the national characteristic of fearlessness and courage, although she was timorous at times. Christianity had softened the nature of each, and made them more sensitive; but, like the men, Burmese females are trained to ride their spirited horses or swim the rivers with boldness, and Domea’s courage would be found faithful in times of real danger. Again, it may seem also a matter of surprise that both Aungua and Domea yielded so easily to the counsel of Momien. Remembering that from infancy

they had been moulded by him, and that in him they found more love, sympathy, and tenderness than in any of their own relatives, we need not wonder that they had learned to reverence him and respect his advice on all matters ; they were to him indeed as children in Christ.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE NIGHT ATTACK.

UNCERTAINTY is stamped on every human plan. Bright visions have been formed in the mind, and golden hopes have illuminated the heart ; skies have been without a cloud ; but soon the dreams fade, the hopes are blighted, and the dark storm-clouds gathering overcast the sky.

It is sad, but it is true, and not less true in the case of our Christian friends in whose fortunes we are interested. With them, "all went merry as the marriage bell." The danger seemed already overcome, and a few brief days of toil might see them settled in a happy and cloudless home. The tears are dried from Domea's eyes, the doubts of Aungua are dispersed, and the heart of Momien is strengthened in faith, for the future is bright.

Ah ! the storm is brewing fast which shall lay those fair blossoms blighted on the ground. The tempest is gathering rapidly, and even now may be

heard the first mutterings of the storm in the little wood where the armed smugglers lie concealed.

Scarcely had they waited half-an-hour, and weary time it was for the men, when the quick ear of the priest caught the sound of footfalls coming down the path. Closer in the underwood, and as still as death, lay the smugglers, listening eagerly to the sounds getting nearer and nearer. Soon low voices were heard, and in a few moments Aungua and his mantled lover drew nearer. Pausing not, they hastened on, quite unsuspecting of the hidden danger. The captain from his shaded hiding-place saw the manly step and noble form of the Burman as he trod briskly on, and Grasper felt he had no common assailant to grapple with; but this idea gave the daring rover a thrill of pleasure, for he loved to meet with such opponents. Aungua was allowed to pass unmolested with Domea by his side, but the wily priest, after whispering to Grasper, glided off on their wake to track their footsteps, lest anything should prevent Aungua's return and so thwart his plans. The sound of the retreating footsteps died away in the distance, and the smugglers could now whisper together as they still lay in the underwood.

Wearily passed the time, and both captain and crew



became impatient. Grasper had often engaged in such deeds, but he thirsted for the richer prize beyond. What was the Burman to him so long as his trouble was well compensated? Nevertheless the smuggler chief had a desire to see how his prey would behave, Grasper loved fair play, and had not his conscience been seared, he would have despised such an unmanly act as waylaying a foe; but his notions of fair play would not permit him to run foul of his unconquerable love of gain. This was the object of his life—to accumulate wealth by any means. Bold as a lion, and careless of consequences, he pursued his wild career. Lives he had sacrificed; but he was soothed by the belief it was in self-defence, and this troubled him not. But these dark deeds had hardened his heart, although, for his band of men, he felt almost a fatherly care. He spared no money to make them comfortable; but even in this, his love of wealth was one grand motive for so doing. If he sowed liberally, should he not reap an abundant harvest? He ruled them with a strong hand; but very seldom did they give him trouble by their riots. Captain Harry Grasper was not a dissipated man himself, far from it. Laughing at the excesses and follies of others, he was most cautious, although he allowed them every freedom to gratify

their passions. Looking at his open countenance would give us a very slight idea of a deep meditative character ; but Grasper was such. Often did he brood over the past, and dream of the future for hours, and think of home. Home ! Has the smuggler a home ? That man of dark deeds a home ? Truly has he. Away, thousands of miles from that little wood where lay the rover, on the coast of Ireland, a fine house stands in a secluded bay. All that wealth can purchase is there ; servants throng the hall ; but in the room where sits the aged mistress of the mansion, all is quiet. See her face furrowed by time, and pale with care, and the tears glisten in those dimmed eyes as she gazes on a portrait. It is that of a noble-looking man, dressed in a seafaring garb. The portrait is that of the father ; the aged mistress of the house is the mother. And here in Captain Grasper, the daring smuggler, we see the son ; and he often thought of his home.

Wealth amassed by his father and partly by himself by lawless means, had bought that home, but the smuggler's son, greedy for more, still pursues his roving career. Perhaps Grasper's thoughts were of his home—perhaps recalling the past as he leant against the tree with his arms folded : wherever they

were, a light touch on his arm suddenly recalled them and made him start. "Hist," whispered the priest, for it was he; "hist! he comes."

All was quietness again, and all in readiness; the smugglers crouching ready to seize their prey. On came the unsuspecting Aungua; and as he entered the gloomy copse, from both sides of the path the smugglers made a rush. Quick as thought Aungua heard the movement, and with a bound he cleared their grasp, but he fled not. Smartly he turned with drawn sword and threw himself on his guard. "Back, lads," cried the chief, "leave him to me;" and with cutlass drawn he advanced. Their weapons met with a ring; but met once only, for the priest stepping unseen behind Aungua, like lightning threw his mantle over his head, and clasping his long arms around the youth's body, pinned his arms, the shock sending his sword flying among the trees. He struggled fiercely but vainly, for the strong seamen surrounded him and he was bound securely. Freeing his head from the mantle folds they gagged him. Poor Aungua was helpless and not a sound could he utter.

Scarce giving him time to comprehend his situation, the captors moved off, dragging more than

leading their bewildered prize. A rush of conflicting thoughts made him feel like one in a dream, but soon Aungua recovered his clearness of mind. Escape he saw was hopeless for the present, but his keen eye glanced carefully over each of his captors. With surprise he saw they were some of the crew of the stranger ship; and with greater amazement still he saw the yellow under-robcs, and even caught the gleaming eyes of a priest of his own land. Foolishly exultant at success, and over confident that his prey could never have an opportunity to betray him, the priest forgot his cunning policy, and gave Aungua ample time and opportunity to fix his repulsive countenance on his memory. Whilst a thousand different reasons for this scene suggested themselves to his mind, the captors moved on until they reached the river side, when Grasper gave a clear whistle. A flash of light from the dark river showed them the direction of the boats, which they soon reached. The tide was out, and wading through the mud, the smugglers, with rough hands, lifted Aungua bodily into one of the boats, and after lashing his feet tightly together, threw him carelessly under the thwarts. He saw the uselessness of struggling, and he fancied where his captors were taking

him ; but why, or by whom directed, were questions he could not solve. .

At a word from the captain, the old boatswain landed his men, and the smugglers mustered once more. After seeing that their weapons were in good order, and stout lines and dark lanterns with the party, and leaving four men to guard the boats and the prisoner, over whom Grasper threw a large cloak (for his bold defence pleased the smuggler), the sixteen daring fellows divided into two bands, and moved silently off, headed by their chief, the boatswain, and the native priest. Soon the tramp of the band died away in the distance as they wended their way towards the village.

Preceding them, we will take a look into the threatened home.

Threading our way through the maze of huts, whilst pariah dogs snarl at us by dozens from beneath the raised hatches, we cross the main street, pass down a road by the side of the temple, and soon reach the old merchant's home. By day we should see this house embedded in trees. It is surrounded by a strong wooden fence, lined with prickly pears. Picturesque groups of mango and cocoa-nut, with other beautiful tropical trees, are seen in sweet disorder.

Shrubs of various kinds, and most conspicuous of all, the fragrant yellow-flowered padouk, an ever-green of considerable beauty, make the spot picturesque. A road lined with these gay trees leads to the dwelling, which is the usual teak-built house, of two stories; the upper surrounded by a balcony supported by strong pillars, thus forming a colonnade around the house.

Passing through a low-roofed passage, we enter a large square central hall. On two sides are rows of apartments; at the back, a passage leading to the domestic offices beyond. Supported by pillars, a raised gallery, also square, looks down upon the hall, which is gaily lighted by a large chandelier pendant from the lofty ceiling. The various sleeping apartments open upon this gallery, which is approached by a wide staircase from one of the side apartments or lobby.

Little noise is heard; the domestics are nearly all asleep, but two still linger in the hall. Entering the first apartment, on the left wing, we find it spacious and most luxuriously furnished. Two Venetian windows look out upon the front and side gardens. Lighted by a large stand-lamp of oil, with many flaming branches, we see two occupants; one, a

youthful female, splendidly attired in silk taming and muslin jacket; her ear-lobes weighed down with rolls of solid gold, in lieu of cigar tubes; around her neck is a rich necklace, and gaudy bracelets entwine her arms. She is smoking one of the huge green cigars, and sitting indolently on a couch drawn up to the table. Pacing the room is the old merchant, Monchaboo, with arms folded; his turban is off, and his thin hair tied into a knot at the top of his head. His costume is the same as when we made his acquaintance. Short, harsh-featured, and extremely corpulent he walks the room with slow steps and sober countenance. All national hilarity has disappeared. Like men of other climes, business has thrown a coating of care and fretfulness over his heart. A remark from his wife, for such she was, brought Monchaboo to a halt just before her.

"Shall we have our boat races before the war boats sail?" said she, removing her cigar as she leisurely whiffed out the smoke. "I have betted largely on our canoe. I long for the sport; some boats must be upset, and then what fun it is. I wish we had them oftener, it is so dull here; too dull." After every sentence, spoken quickly, came tugs at the cigar.

"Ugh!" grunted her unamiable lord in reply,

moving off on his restless walk again. "Ugh ! too dull ! what next will you say ? what next will you have ? Too dull ! Well, to gratify thee, we shall soon have our festivals. It is my brother's intention to have them as soon as the army is gone, that we who remain may ask Guadama's aid on their behalf. Will this be enough ?"

"Ah, that is better," returned his merry spouse ; "we shall have sport then. We must have a barge and dancing girls from our village. Kemmendine must not be behind. Ay, indeed, I know not but myself may join them."

"Cease your folly ! when will you learn wisdom ?" Her light speech had roused the old man's anger ; she had disturbed his sober thoughts by her light but truly national style of talk. "Money ! money !" continued he, pacing still more rapidly ; "boat races, dancing-girls, festivals, all take money."

"And what if they do ?" retorted the spouse, sharply ; "what if they do ? Must not a merchant's wife have money, and plenty, too ? Shall it be said that the wife of Monchaboo is less liberal than her poorer neighbours !"

"Stop, stop !" cried Monchaboo, but she would not stop.



"Shame on you," continued she ; "if I think not of the money, you think not of our dignity. A merchant's wife, and a magistrate's also ; sister-in-law to the Grand Seredan of Shoodagon, and to the Maywoon of a Burmese province ; shall I be behind others on these gay days ? What next will you want ?"

The tiger was roused, but the storm soon passed off, and the lady's indignation having found vent, she sullenly applied herself to her green cheroot.

"Well, well," replied her lord, "we must also maintain our dignity, but you speak too hastily. Yes, we must maintain our dignity. We will have a barge, and you shall bet on the races ; men shall say that is the great Monchaboo !"

Poor old man ; a love of human plaudits made him bow more lowly than did his god Guadama. His affections were centred wholly on human dignity. Gold he loved not for itself, but as the readiest means of gratifying his heart's desires. Soothed by having attained her point, his spouse continued smoking in silence, whilst he, with his thoughts still on dignity and how to attain it, continued his walk up and down the room. Her allusion to this had probed the old wound afresh. His dignity had been wounded by

his daughter Domea seeking to ally herself to a penniless and a despised youth. This galled him, and on this he pondered.

Let us look into his thoughts. A fair prospect of a sudden leap into a high position was offered by allying his daughter to Munris, who is may-woon, or viceroy, of a province. Munris is captivated by Domea's gentleness and her charms, and he ous for the alliance. What is to hinder it? Ah, the old merchant felt mad to think his own daughter should thus try to thwart, and, as he thought, degrade him. But he determines she shall yield to force, if not to persuasion. His heart is steeled for this; but, ah! a ray of kindness seems to creep over his heart. Is not Domea his own child, and he once loved her. How her gentleness contrasted with the gaiety and cruelty of his wife. From Domea his thoughts roamed to Domea's mother, who though an idolater had possessed her daughter's natural gentleness. Where these thoughts might have led him, I know not, but his musings were harshly terminated by his spouse exclaiming, "Heigho, dreamer! noble company, you. What, think you, I saw to-day?"

"What was it? tell me." Ah, most untimely interruption! Just as the hardened heart was begin-

ning to thaw under the soft influence of bygone recollections creeping over his soul, as if the dead had returned to whisper of love and duty in his ears, this cold wind nipped the fair blossoms, and the tree resumed its barrenness.

“Ah, it was good sport. Seldom have I seen so good before,” continued the wife, gaily. “I was out on the river about mid-day, and returning, when I saw a canoe very deeply laden with plantains come across the river. It was the old fruit-seller who lives near the Temple. It had been a hard day’s work, I wager, to get all the fruit together. Well, the old man had his little boy to assist him, and they went all safe until they reached the centre of the swift river. Oh, the sport! It was so capital! The old man was looking down the river, when suddenly a large tree, drifting down the stream, struck the canoe. Oh, it was good! The water rushed in, and down went the canoe, plantains and all. You should have seen the old man when he came to the top of the water, he looked so queer; and when he swam to land with his boy, and his boat and fruit all gone, oh, I did enjoy the sport, and so did all who saw it.”

Long and loudly did the lady of Burmah laugh at the recollection of the poor old man’s disaster, and

when her merriment (in which even Monchaboo joined) was somewhat subsided, she rose and left the room. The merchant remained a short time, during which his countenance resumed its serious expression. He soon followed his spouse into the hall, and taking up an oil lamp, he turned into the lobby at his left, and ascended the stairs.

The plan of the upstairs, we have before seen, was a square, with a gallery running round in front of the dormitories, and looking down to the hall beneath. The two wings, extending the whole depth of the house, contained four large apartments each, and three rooms at the front and three at the back completed the square. The left wing, as we enter the house, was occupied solely by the merchant, his wife, and their valuables. In the other wing lay our gentle friend Domea and her attendants, whilst faithful domestics occupied some of the other rooms. The other servants occupied a house in the rear of this dwelling. All is quietness; every soul deep in slumber within the merchant's home. We enter the third room, counting back, in the left wing. It has a massive door, well barred, and a window of Venetians, uniform with the others, but strong bars of teak defend it. This is the old man's treasury, and the

wealth-laden chests, of small size but of great weight, occupy the centre. Bales of rich silks are everywhere heaped up. In the side partition is a small door communicating through the next apartment to the merchant's room at the end of the wing.

Midnight has passed. Within all is darkness, and nothing is heard but the chirp of the gecko, or lizard. Without all is gloom, and the cries of jackals and howls of pariah dogs alone are heard. A little rustling of the trees, and several dark forms stepped lightly into the shadow of the colonnade. It was the smuggler band. Captain Grasper stationed four to guard the front and back entrances, and with the remainder commenced operations. An open attack he did not meditate. None spoke but himself, and he gave his orders in low whispers. The plan being already arranged, the active Spaniard, Carlo, clambered on to the balcony above, where he lashed one end of a rope ladder; this being tautened, Grasper, the boat-swain, and six of the men, with the priest, mounted. Here the Burman gave every explanation in whispers to the captain, and promising to be on board the brigantine in a few nights, he, for greater safety, left the balcony and disappeared. Now were the smugglers to prosecute their task alone. Little

difficulty that, for nothing but wooden bars intercepted their progress, and the old boatswain had come well supplied with tools.

All slept soundly within. Chirp, chirp, sounded the rich green geckos as they darted from nook to nook, and swiftly, but noiselessly worked the well-greased saws of the smugglers at the window. Beyond the room not a sound could be heard. Lath after lath was then removed, and then the bars gradually yielded. Soon an opening was made, and one by one the marauders crept into the room, leaving two outside. Without shoes they made no noise, and a dark lantern turned on showed them the whole contents of the room. The priest had truly described them, and there were the very chests containing the prize. Ah, how the rovers' hearts exulted at this tempting sight. Eyes looked into eyes, and each glanced their great delight. But to work! A gesture now is command enough, and a smuggler kneeling at each door listens attentively while the others make speed. Grasper himself works lustily. The chests are lifted carefully through the window, one by one, and lowered by stout lines into the colonnade. One, two have thus been lowered: the third is raised, when an unlucky stumble brought one end

to the floor with a loud blow. Hark ! fixed as marble the smugglers listened, whilst angry eyes greeted the offending tar. None has heard it : the geckos chirp undisturbed, and all else is silent. Swiftly they work again. Three, four, the chests are lowered away, and now but two remain. The men stoop to raise another, when the man listening at the side door made a sign which checked every movement. Creeping to his side the captain listens : something is moving in the room beyond the next. Hist ! not a breath is heard from the smugglers. The sounds come nearer ; the door in the next room is opened. Darken the lantern. Nearer, nearer light footsteps approach. Grasper and the boatswain crouch on each side of the door, and the men conceal themselves behind the bales. The bolts of this very door gently go back ; the lock is turned ; slowly the door opens, and a man having a lamp springs in. It is the old merchant.

One faint cry, and he was seized by the powerful captain, who, with one arm clasped around his body, holds his hand over Monchaboo's mouth. In the merchant's hand was a long dagger to which he clung tenaciously, and struggled with the smuggler chief. "Quick, lads ; out with the chests. Bear a hand there, boatswain ;" all this in a deep whisper. Ah, Grasper,

be not too confident. The old man possessed strength, and his danger gave him mighty power. He writhed; he struggled; tried to use his dagger; and the captain had his work to do, but none dare interfere. What was to be done? "Stop his capers, cap'n," whispered the boatswain. "If we leave him alive, he must know us, and all is up!" Still they struggled, but Grasper held the old man in a vice; powerless to act or speak, he still writhed his almost naked body. Again the tempter's whisper, "Stop his caper, cap'n. You'll spoil all; they'll hear the noise, and you'll lose the prize. Come, boy, are you turned a woman?" At this juncture, by his writhings, the old merchant's dagger arm was freed. Swift as thought the weapon was raised and aimed at Grasper's heart. Swifter than thought he caught the descending arm, and needing no more persuasion, with a Samson strength the dagger point was turned to the old man's own naked breast. Wildly his eyes gleamed with despair. One wrench, and one powerful thrust of that giant's hand, and poor old Monchaboo fell pierced to the hilt on a bale of his own goods. The blood gushed a crimson stream; he writhed in agony. "Domea, Domea! come to me, Domea!" he uttered in faint, choking tones: one convulsive struggle, and all was over!



This deed, tardily told, was briefly done, and the smugglers listened to hear if all was safe. The struggle had been unheard. Gaily chirped the lizards, and Grasper, fearing to risk being burdened too heavily, left the sixth chest behind, and with his men stealthily descended to the colonnade. Assembling his men, they lifted the chests, two men to each, and with himself, boatswain, and the remainder, with drawn cutlasses, as a guard, and to relieve the bearers, they slowly moved through the ground towards the village by the way they came.

In little more than half-an-hour from this time the two boats gained the brigantine with their double prize. Both were consigned to different cabins for security, and the boats hoisted to the davits. Giving his crew and himself stiff bumpers of grog, Captain Grasper betook himself to a sound sleep. Soon all was still as usual, and the armed look-out trod the deck of the *Saucy Jane*, whilst she, unconscious of the deeds that made her owner dreaded, lay like a sleeping swan upon the water.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## BUDDHISM AND ITS PRIESTS.

MAN must have an object to worship. Some being more powerful, more wise, or more holy than himself, he must bow down to. I speak not of individuals, or of the straggling, fruitless branches of the great trees of society. We see thousands of such who, given up wholly to their vile passions and animal appetites, have no religion ; worship no superior being ; but on beholding nations and tribes as *whole* bodies, we find they have, with rare exceptions, some higher and better being to whom they look for guidance. Perhaps it is the great monitor or good spirit of the American Indian, to whom he looks in his simple way ; or it may be various ideals, so to speak, various lifeless blocks, supposed to be endowed with qualities good and desirable, to whom the poor African or the natives of Eastern India bow down in worship. And it may be some animal is the medium through which men, such as the ancient Egyptians, acknowledged their

deity. To the right hand and to the left hand of Christianity we see the children of men acknowledging some superior and supreme being. It is a great fact that man must worship.

Glancing over the face of the earth, and viewing the vast varieties of its religions, what a striking resemblance we see in all, as though, originally of one faith, mankind had been scattered in religion as in tongue at the grand scene on the plains of Shinar, where Babel reared its haughty head. In the object of worship we see a most remarkable likeness. Some may differ widely, and perhaps have lost all likeness. Time in its march, perchance, has worked many changes; but view the various faiths of the various nations in their original state, as far as we can trace them, and this remarkable similarity in the objects of worship is at once seen. One supreme being, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good, we find in nearly all. This being, with some worshipped without a medium, is by others adored through the medium of exalted beings of different glories; and these again are approached through the medium of their various images. Still here is invariably one supreme being, maker and ruler of all.

Again, in the various beliefs of a future state we

see striking resemblances. There are few nations or tribes who do not believe in man's immortal state. Perhaps it is in the hunting grounds of the Indian, the sensual paradise of Mahomet's followers, or the pleasures of the Burman heaven on the hills of Meru, where will dwell man's soul ; but the immortal state is believed in.

Another likeness is seen in the beliefs in good and evil spirits ; in good and evil deeds ; and in future rewards for the one, and future punishments for the other.

One more similarity is seen, and a most striking one it is, in the various traditions of the world. Tribes separated from each other by vast and apparently untraversed tracts of land and water, hold astonishingly similar traditions. Take for example the case of the ancient inhabitants of the New World. Unknown by the then known world before the days of Columbus, having no means of communicating with, or gaining information from, in truth, ignorant of the existence of the nations who lived on earth's eastern half ; nevertheless we find that when Fernandez Cortes penetrated to the heart of South America, and discovered the powerful nation of Mexicans, they held strange traditions of the world's crea-

tion, and more remarkable still, of the deluge of the world. By their account, all mankind was destroyed *excepting* a few who escaped in a huge ark that floated on the waters. In this ark were animals and birds of all kinds. When the waters had somewhat abated, a *raven* was sent forth, but it returned not ; a *dove* was next dispatched, and it came back bearing the twig of a tree in its beak !

Such was the tradition of the Mexicans respecting the Deluge, and similar ideas are found in almost every nation of the earth.

The different beliefs and traditions of nations, as diversified as their colours or character, might be traced, and a strange connexion observable in all ; a faint, but still a resemblance to the pure doctrines of Christianity : but Burmah more particularly demands our present attention. Let us take a brief glance at the leading features of the Burmese religion and its priests.

The origin of Buddhism, which enslaves the souls of more than two hundred millions of the human family, is lost in obscurity. By one account we are told that Brahma, the prophet of the Hindoos, and who represented the Deity, in wisdom, power, omniscience, and excellence, was followed by two

other representatives of the Deity, Vishnu and Boudh; from the latter sprang Buddhism, which rapidly diffused itself from Hindostan all over China.

Another account, and one held by the Burmese themselves, gives Ceylon as the birthplace of Buddhism, whence it was brought to Burmah about six hundred years ago. Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, China, and the Japan Islands are all now under its baneful shadow. In each of those countries the religion is somewhat varied.

The Burmese worship no supreme being. They believe that the universe is self-existent and eternal: hence to them there is no need of a supreme benign ruler, and accordingly they acknowledge none. They believe, in fact, that our world was existent from all eternity, and they have ideas similar to that of geological revolutions, wherein the world's inhabitants were all destroyed by properties in itself, and again restored and peopled by its self-creating power. Good and evil deeds they hold will meet with rewards and punishments. Regions of bliss and perfect rest they people with superior beings, similar to the angels and saints of our Christian belief. These beings, called Nats, spiritual and invisible, possessing powers of rapid

locomotion, inhabit the happy regions of the Meru hills, being also the site of the Hindoo's heaven. There are also evil spirits; Nats who have fallen from their happy state by their misbehaviour, and who, issuing from their gloomy abodes, torment the children of men. To attain the bliss of Meru and share the joys of the happy Nats is the hope of the Burman. To do this, he must live a moral life, according to the commands and precepts contained in their holy Damarthal, which was compiled by Meru, a celebrated recluse and holy being. These laws are the sayings of remarkable persons who have appeared on earth at intervals of many thousand years, and after living holy lives for great periods, under various human characters, leave laws for the guidance of men, and then attain to Meru's bliss. These personages, called "Boodhs," are the object of Burmese worship. There have been many Boodhs in succession, and Guadama, the last, is now worshipped; and at the date of this tale he has been the object of adoration for two thousand four hundred and eighteen years. The next Boodh, whose advent will dethrone Guadama from the people's heart, is named Arimidayya.

Transmigration of the soul into various animals, insects, fish, and reptiles, with the final consignment

to the dismal home of fallen spirits, is the Burmese belief of punishment for evil deeds; whilst transmigration into the forms of high and good men for many ages, with ultimate admission to the hills of Meru, form the future reward of Burmese godliness.

The commandments in the Damarthal are chiefly levelled against all killing, whether human beings or any living thing; against theft, lying, drunkenness, and the use of intoxicating drink; and against sensual indulgences. Its priests are of two classes, the Rhahaans and the Phongis. Some writers think the title of priest misapplied to Buddhists, because they worship no supreme being; but as they have an object to worship, there would naturally be priests to conduct that worship; therefore, as well as being merely monks or better men than the generality of Burmese, the Rhahaans and Phongis may, with justice, be styled priests. The priests of Buddhism are of two classes, the Rhahaan or superior, and Phongi or inferior. These men are wholly given up to religious life, and they congregate in bodies, living in monasteries or kyongs under a chief or head; these heads again being subordinate to the high priest, or Seredan, something like the Pope.



Studying the Damarthal, living a life of celibacy, spending their time in worshipping Guadama, conducting the festivals in his honour, abstaining from all worldly concerns, and exhorting the people—these are the duties of the priests, and they also officiate as national pedagogues, their kyoungs being open to the youth of Burmah, whom they teach free of charge. For their support they trust to the generosity of the public. Each day Phongis traverse the streets, asking nothing, but receiving abundant contributions of rice, curry, and fruits : indeed, everything to satisfy the appetite. The costume of these priests, it has been said, is a robe of yellow, completely enveloping the body from the neck to the heels, and their heads are shaven. There are also nunneries ; the nuns were likewise clothed in yellow, and lived in separate kyoungs, but we find, in later years, these institutions were abolished as they tended materially to check the national prosperity.

In character, the priests of Burmah are, without doubt, generally good and peaceful ; but can it be expected that devotees to such a creed as Buddhism, which requires its believers to bow down in homage to mere men, or to their lifeless images—can it be

expected that such devotees would long remain, if indeed they ever were, pure ?

But we are running away from the incidents of our story.

The morning following the successful entry of the pirate and his crew into the merchant's house, and the awful result in the old man's murder, his brother, the Seredan, is peacefully pacing the hallowed ground around Shoodagon. The sun has just risen above the east, heralded by a splendid array of gorgeously tinted clouds, which his rising has dissipated ; and now, glancing across hill and dale, river and rill, his fierce rays sparkle on the small gilded temple tops, and from the grand, golden Shoodagon they are flung back as from a burnished shield ; whilst the tiny bells, surrounding the sacred tee, tinkle a merry peal. Alone the Seredan paces, barefooted and bareheaded, in front of the temples at the pagoda's base. None dare to interrupt the holy father's meditations, but in and out the huge temple's hall flock many yellow-garbed priests ; and a few, but very few, devout Burmese civilians come to make their morning orisons at Guadama's feet. For some moments the Seredan thus walked undisturbed, but at length he beckoned

to a youthful priest, who humbly approached with downcast eyes. "Where is Koonah?" said his superior. Without a word, the youth moved off, and in a brief time the very priest whose villanies we have witnessed, approached his chief with humble demeanour.

Glancing around to see that none listened, the Seredan continued his walk, followed by his inferior.

"Koonah, how have you succeeded with the misguided youth?"

"Praise be to Guadama, well, most holy father!"

"Where is he now?"

"On board the stranger ship, and I wait your commands."

The eyes had lost their fierceness, and looked all devout and meek.

"Koonah!" continued his superior, "I before told you that when the youth is here under our especial care, we shall have better opportunities of drawing him back to the worship of Buddha, and this you know it is our duty to attempt. I told you also that, seeing so many of the warriors are about who are oftentimes strongheaded and wilful, I deem it wise to have the youth conducted hither by night. Have you kept your own counsel, Koonah?"

"None but Guhlinugah has heard of this, holy father."

"Good ! let him only know of this. It is needless to let it be known, lest it should reach the ears of the ungodly warriors, and thence to the Boa, who likes not his warriors meddled with ; but I deem Guadama's glory of greater interest to us, Koonah, than even our good Boa's. For this reason, I desire that none but Guhlinugah and yourself know of this. The moon is waning fast and the nights are dark. Bring the youth on shore by night, and place him in the deepest dungeon. You understand, Koonah ?"

"Well, holy father," replied he ; "and all shall be done as you command."

Just as Koonah ceased, both himself and the Seredan were startled by a slight noise from the priests at the temple's entrance, and looking, to ascertain the cause, they saw a Burman rush through from the covered way, who hastily ran and knelt before the high priest, whilst Koonah retired a few paces, but cunningly remained within hearing.

"Why this haste, my son ? What news ?—speak !" exclaimed the Seredan to the kneeling Burman, who seemed heated with rapid running.

"Bad news, good father !" replied he. "I come

from Kemmendine, from the house of Moncha-boo."

"Ah! why then this speed? Hasten, my son, and tell me thy message."

"Holy father, my master, your brother, is dead."

"Dead—dead! sayest thou? My brother dead?" The sudden news gave the Seredan a shock, and he bowed his head in grief, whilst Koonah clasped his hands and looked heavenward in pure amazement. A thought flashed through his mind—the *midnight attempt*; but ere he could collect his thoughts, the Seredan, rousing from his surprise, said to the kneeling Burman, "Rise, my son, and tell me all you have to say. How did this happen?—and when?"

Rising at the priest's desire, the Burman replied, "Last night, good father, my master remained later from his chamber than usual. Something unpleasant had occurred, and our young mistress, Domea, retired weeping, but the master remained with his wife. At length all retired, and everything was secure. My chamber is near the strong room, and I was awoke about a little past midnight by a noise of something falling. I listened, but hearing no more, I fell asleep again, but was suddenly aroused again by a shriek which awoke several of my fellow-servants. Running

to the master's room, we found it empty, but the doors of the other rooms open. Hastening in, we entered the strong room. Oh ! good father, to our horror we found our master, Monchaboo, murdered—stabbed ! and the dagger, his own, too, still in the wound ; and our poor mistress senseless on the floor !”

Terror-stricken stood the Seredan during this recital ; but when the first shock was over, his habitual calmness resumed its sway ; and Koonah also listened with eagerness.

“Continue, my son,” said the Seredan, as he saw the man had paused. “How did this happen ?”

“We know not, good father. On examining the room we found a large opening had been cut in the window, and five of the master's treasure chests were gone. How or where we know not. As soon as day broke, I hastened to tell you, good father.”

For some moments neither spoke, but each remained gazing on the ground ; at length the Seredan, turning to his inferior, said—

“Give this man some refreshment, Koonah, and then return to me. And you, my son,” turning to the Burman, “return to Kemmendine, and tell thy mistress I will be there before the day has passed.”

The Seredan turned and continued his walk once more, whilst Koonah hurried away to refresh the man, and in a short time returned alone to his superior.

Silently and slowly paced the Seredan, deep in a flood of thought. The startling news he had just received seemed to overturn all his plans for his brother's aggrandizement. His proceeding so far, his implication in the youth's capture and confinement, seemed now all terminated by this sad blow. Conflicting thoughts passed through his mind, but soon he became more composed. What now was to be done? Should he release the youth and go no further? Ah, no! that would never do. Inquiries would be made, and the truth found out. Besides, where was the chance of winning him back to Guadama's worship? No; that must not be! Led in the outset to entrap him to fulfil his brother's desires, the Seredan now saw a means of glorifying his idol. Moreover, did not Monchaboo, when alive, and at their last meeting, promise to enrich his dear pagoda? He was gone; but might not the wealthy rival fulfil those intentions, if Aungua was kept away and Domea become his? The idolater bows before his god in heart: Guadama must

be glorified—Shoodagon enriched ! The means were at hand ; it needed only care and cunning that no suspicions of his real intentions should enter the minds of his tools.

Such were the thoughts which passed through the Seredan's mind. As he walked more at ease, the priest, Koonah, remained standing a little at one side, waiting for his superior to speak, but also deep in thought. The messenger's recital had worked mightily upon him. He had not counted upon this. In prospect he had, it is true, whilst planning the robbery thought such a thing might happen ; but now the awful deed in all its ruddy clearness burst upon him he felt bewildered. Should it by any means reach the Seredan's knowledge that the smuggler had done this deed at his instigation, and under his guidance, ruin must follow. He must not know this—anything must be done to prevent this. In a few moments these wild thoughts sobered down ; the way seemed clearer. After all, why should the old man's death interfere with him ? Wealth would be his—it is his ; but to enjoy it, he must leave the priesthood, but not now !

Pausing abruptly before the waiting Phongis, the high priest said, " Koonah, it seems somewhat strange



that this foul murder was perpetrated last night, and at the time the youth was taken by the strange captain ; do you not see this strange connexion, Koonah ? ”

“ Indeed I do, holy father,” replied the Phongis ; “ it does seem strange, but it cannot be so. They knew not the house ; and see, good father,” he continued, earnestly, “ whoever committed the deed knew where the treasure was ; how, then, could the strangers be guilty ? ”

“ Thou art right, Koonah : it could not have been them, and I praise thy goodness in defending the innocent ; but perhaps it was some evil warrior—who knows ? ”

“ Or some of the desperate jungle robbers, holy father,” gladly suggested Koonah.

“ Yes, or them,” replied the Seredan ; “ some day, doubtless, and this will be unravelled ; but now, good Koonah, carry out my instructions with respect to this youth. This sad event must not check our performance of duty or mercy towards those who have strayed. And do you and Guhlinugah prepare a canoe, and take me to Kemmendine as the sun declines. Now to your duties, for see, the sun has

mounted high, and you must go down into the town, and gather in the harvest."

Bending lowly before his superior, and raising his hand to his face in homage, the Phongis left the spot. Shortly afterwards he might have been seen slowly traversing the streets of Rangoon, bearing a vessel to receive contributions. In that meek-looking priest, whose eyes, ever cast on the ground, saw not the donors, and whose tongue, sealed with humility, moved not to render thanks, who could have recognised the evil-plotting Koonah?

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE BOATSWAIN'S YARN.

THE *Saucy Jane* is still riding lazily upon the bosom of the Irrawaddy river. Frequently light canoes paddle alongside, laden with fruits, while the brawny tars lounge about the deck, which is covered by an awning fore and aft, and gaze over the bulwarks in most glorious indolence, for it is their lazy time—it is after dinner. Light work at all times; plenty of food, splendid pay, and rich prizes made them free of care. The greater part are watching the evolutions of a light gig belonging to the brigantine, in which the mate and doctor, with a boy, are merrily skimming up and down the river, causing interest to the crew, and amusement to the many Burmans on the bank and on the river.

The *Saucy Jane* carries boats enough to make a respectable deck cargo, but this might be necessary, seeing her occupation. All is activity on shore; timber-yards crowd the river's bank, with rude

wharfs interspersed. Huge rafts of timber, floated down the river from the gigantic teak forests of Pegu, are here broken up, and the great logs, some two or three tons weight, are lightly hauled into the various yards by elephants. These animals, enormous, but sagacious, will drag up the logs, and even stack them with wonderful regularity. Their rough, ungainly movements cause much amusement to the gaping smugglers. Behind the yards, the dark roofs of the native huts are seen, with the high, two-storied roof of the custom-house, and rising here and there high above the roofs, the sacred tee of some temple or holy flagstaff. Above all, the glittering Shoodagon looks down, as if with a fatherly eye, from his tree-crowned hill, upon the square stockaded town of Rangoon.

Another object of great interest attracts the notice of the crew. Two long, bright green canoes, scarcely a foot out of the water, are paddled by eighteen copper-skinned Burmese in each, whilst one gaily dressed squats on the stern, guiding each canoe with a long paddle. They are the racing boats out for practice; just the sport for the white tars. Keeping time to their gay song, the rowers paddle gently, but with increasing speed, until they dash along, side

by side, the short paddle dipping into the water so rapidly as scarcely to be followed by the eye, whilst the rowers sing and shout equally as fast. Away they dash, until one glides ahead, and then the canoes sweep round with a dexterous movement of the steersmen, and back again.

Let us peep into the interior arrangements of the *Saucy Jane*. Her 'tween decks, cleared almost to the captain's cabin, affords splendid accommodation for the crew. Bunks are ranged on both port and starboard sides, and hammocks swing from the beams. Just under the gangway a berth is partitioned off for the boatswain and carpenter. Some of the smugglers are lounging here also ; some stretched lazily in their bunks ; some on chests, while others are gathered in a group around the foremast, which passes through their cabin down to the keelson below. Old faces are here, the very group we listened to the first time we boarded the *Saucy Jane* ; but now several others have also gathered round the old boatswain, as he sits with folded arms and crossed legs on a chest, leaning against the foremast, seemingly a favourite position of his. The indispensable short black pipe is in his mouth. In truth, nearly all the smugglers are

smoking or chewing, whilst pannikins of strong smelling grog are abundant.

"What is it ye say, Jack?" asked the boatswain, speaking to a handsome, manly featured Englishman, with merry eyes and Saxon-brown hair and whiskers. "Why, Pipes, I say," replied Jack, "spin us a yarn about how you came to enter the 'free and easy' trade."

"Spin you a yarn, lad? Well, lads, I don't mind neither, but let's have skipper's health first. Grasping a half filled hook pot by his side, the old man took a long drink, imitated by all the others; and then smacking his lips, and puffing at his pipe before resigning it, he began—

"Well, lads, once on a time I was an honest chap."

"That's when you sailed *boa'sun* of Cap'n Noah's craft, eh, Pipes?" said Jack, and a loud roar of laughter followed from all around.

"Look here, Jack Harding, you spin the yarn yourself, since you know all about it," remarked the boatswain, resuming his pipe.

"Be quiet, Jack, and let's have the yarn," spoke another.

"Heave ahead then, Pipes, and I'll keep order, and

here's a round dozen for the first as interrupts," said Jack, with a serio-comic air, seizing the end of a chest lashing as he spoke.

"Well then, lads," said the boatswain, putting down his pipe once more, "here goes again: once 'pon a time I was an honest chap. Many years ago, 'tis true. I was before the mast in a barque trading to the East Indies. We did not get on at all comfortable; the mate was one of your hard-fisted fellows, and he often used belaying pins, lads. This won't fit, says I to myself, but somehow he never gave us a chance to kick up a row. He asked all 'cording to articles, but he gave us no rest: plenty of work, and bad allowance too. The man who didn't do his work at once, down he went under the mate's belaying pin, until I was about the only one he hadn't tackled. My turn next, and I'll stop this, says I. Mind you, the cap'n wasn't so bad, but he was soft, and the mate had the upper hand in everything. Well, one day 'twas my watch below, and as I lay in my hammock I heard, 'All hands on deck.' Afore we had time to tumble out, in comes the mate; 'Now then, loafer, don't you hear?' This riled me, lads, so I turned round and yawned, as if I was sleepy. In a

minute the mate's monkey was up, and he jumps alongside to haul me out, or cut me down, I didn't see which. 'Belay that, Mr. Mate,' says I, and he gives me a blow. I wanted no more, but I cleared my hammock, and at him. The hands saw fair play : he handled his fists well, but I gave him a little ship-shape mauling, I guess. After this, he was dead on to me ; but he could do nothing, because he hit first. Well, lads, we got to Calcutta, and painting ship outside was the work. I was over the port side of the poop in the channels painting, when the mate looked over and said something, and because I didn't choose to answer his sauce, he squirted a lot of his baccy at me. This nettled me so much, that I jumped aboard and gave him the paint brush right across his face, paint and all. He spied a cutlass on the skylight, which a boy had been cleaning, and he jumped at it ; but I jumped too. He made a rush at me, but I caught his arm, and gave him a fore hip throw on the deck. I was so mad, boys, that I put my foot on the fellow's throat, and just as I was going to give him a prick with the sword, the cap'n and some others collared me. Pretty go this, thinks I. Well, they lashed me taut enough, and I was taken ashore and put in the chokee house. My pipes, there was a



row made. They swore I was going to murder him ; but 'pon my word I never thought of that."

"Avast heaving, shipmate ; that yarn won't do," said one of the men.

"Clew up now, Sawney, or you'll get the dozen," said Jack ; "wasn't Pipes an honest chap then ?"

A laugh from all followed this sally, which the old boatswain took good-naturedly, saying—"Well, lads, it was so. I told them my story, and all about the mate's cruelty, but no use, of course. A poor blue-jacket never gets justice, and never will unless he helps himself. They didn't quite settle what to do with me first time, and before the second came round I had got clear of the sharks."

"How did ye manage that, boa'sun ?" asked half a dozen voices at once, full of interest.

"Why, lads, you must know the chokee was near the river. It was a big stone house, all square, and guarded by the black soldiers. Little looking after I got, depend upon it. The walls were strong enough, they thought, and the windows too small to get through. They only brought allowance twice a day, and then just opened the door and shoved the grub in, and slammed it again. In my cell was a darkey, who had done something bad. We soon got chums ;

and you must know my chum had got a good head, if he was black ; and split my canvas if he hadn't dug a hole just under his bed, big enough for me to crawl through. He was thinking to get out under the wall ; that he was, lads. ' Heave ahead, chum,' says I, and we both worked spell and spell. When the nights came round, we hove the stuff out through the window bars, and the river washed it away. We could look out and see the dead niggers floating down the river, and little piccaninnies too. Plenty of boats and canoes, suited exactly when we could get out. Well, we got the hole all right ; very little more to do. Before we could start I was had up to be tried, and then put back again. We waited no longer, and that night, just new moon, and quite dark, we broke through the hole, and got outside the chokee ; for our cell was a corner one, lads ; one side washed by the river. We soon found a canoe, so chum and I jumped in and paddled down the river. Ah ! lads, I could spin a yarn as long as a main t'bowline, but not now. Some other time will do."

" Tell us how you got on, then, boa'swun," said Jack.

" Ay, let's know how you entered the free and easy," said another.

" Soon told that, lads," replied the old tar, whose

hook pot was drained by this time, for he loved his grog. "Gupta and me kept good chums all the time, and we roamed about the country for months. He knew everything and everybody nearly, so I got on spanking. When we got tired of knocking about we shipped under false colours. Gupta went cook, and I went 'fore the stick, and so I got home again, but chum and me stuck together. Trading ships won't do now, says I ; so, lads, I got on board old Cap'n Harry's craft. That's more than thirty years ago ; and here I am now with young cap'n ; and there's old Gupta too, bless his purty skin. Ain't it all real truth, chum ?" The man he addressed was a tall, bony, dark skinned native of Hindostan, who just then came down from deck, and hearing his name mentioned, and seeing all eyes turned towards him, he said, with a grin which showed his ivory teeth, "Atcha, sahib—all boss, all boss—very true. This better Calcutta chokee, eh, sahib ?"

Laughter and boisterous conversation followed. The old boatswain is a somewhat interesting character, being so intimately connected with the smuggler captain. From previous yarns, and his talk with the chief, it is clear he has long been in this unlawful trade. He served many years under the smuggler's

father, and now has become old and hardened; but that he loves his young commander is also clear, as far as so ruthless a nature is capable of such a feeling. None like skipper to him. Praise his captain, and he is pleased. Desperately fond of drink, he lives among the men from mere choice, to indulge this passion more freely; and thus he also keeps a check upon the men, and tends to keep alive a spirit of regard for the captain among the crew. Besides, he possesses awful influence over Captain Grasper, and this influence is not used for good. If the men need a favour, the boatswain pleads, and gets it for them. If an expedition is planned, it would be incomplete without him. In truth, although treated as one of themselves by the men, and generally as such by his captain, the old boatswain possesses influence enough to make him the actual, but secret head of all.

But we linger. What has become of poor Aungua, gentle Domea, and the good old Momien? The past twelve hours must have seemed ages to each.

Confined in the stern cabin, next to the captain's, Aungua was strictly guarded by an armed smuggler. After being brought on board the preceding night, his

arms and legs were set free and his mouth ungagged. Thoroughly pleased with his look and bold bearing, but as thoroughly determined to keep faith with his employers, Grasper treated his captive with every kindness, and allowed him liberty of limbs, but he was narrowly guarded, and no Burmese allowed to come on deck.

The last night's occurrences had completely puzzled Aungua. But a few brief moments after he had left Domea in high spirits and bright hopes of the future, he found himself suddenly a prisoner; but why, he knew not. Lying bound in the boat, waiting the smugglers' return—whose departure he knew of only by the sound of their retreating footsteps—he had ample time for reflection; but every fresh thought only served to make the affair more intricate: unravel it he could not. The priest, too! what was he doing there? And when the rovers returned and placed part of their prize in the boat (although he only heard their movements, being veiled by the cloak), more and more intricate became the maze of events. He felt the boat bounding over the water, under the sinewy arms of his captors. Then came the hoisting on board, which was roughly done, and his consign-

ment to the cabin. Then the smuggler chief visited him for a few moments, and spoke to him. Aungua asked questions, but Grasper merely smiled, and told him he was all right. The Burmese nature made Aungua reserved, and, seeing his questions useless, he refrained from pressing them. Tired and confused, he nevertheless could not sleep, but listened all the night to the steady tramp and low voices of the watch. Morning came, and with it a visit from Grasper.

"Come, young fellow, how have you slept?" asked he, seating himself on a chest, and looking at Aungua, who had not moved from his seat. Some seconds passed without a reply, each scanning the other closely. Aungua saw a giant before him, but a good-tempered looking man, with nothing to fear from. Grasper saw a well-knit frame and bold flashing eyes, but not a spark of fear in his captive. "Think you, stranger," replied the Burmese, "I care to sleep when I know not the danger I am in?"

"Ah! as to that, young fellow—but tell me your name, for we must be good chums before we part; for, strand me, but I like you amazingly!"

"My name, stranger, is Aungua. Now let me know yours," said he, smiling at his captor's open manner.

"Call me captain, that will do. Well, Aungua, I was going to say, don't be afraid to sleep. You'll get no harm aboard my craft; and hang me, but I think you had better stop altogether and sign articles, for you're safer here."

"What mean you, captain?—what am I here for?—where am I going?"

"Strand me if I know, youngster! Look here now, I don't mind telling you this. You've offended somebody ashore here, and somebody comes to me to get hold of you. Nothing to do with me, lad. Never saw you before—didn't know you—so I took the job! The order was to keep you here until somebody fetched you; but, 'pon my honour, I should like to see the ending of this."

"Captain, why keep me, since you like me so well? Let me go."

"Belay that, youngster—no blarney, mind! My word's given. But I tell you what, Aungua, when the job's off my hands, you may come aboard and reckon Harry Grasper as your friend, and then I'll tell you all I know. Give us your hand to it, lad."

Most readily did Aungua grasp his hand, and, seeing an advantage, he said—

"But, captain, tell me *who* ordered this to be done?"

"No more, youngster; ask no more, or we shall break friends. Eat what's given you, sleep as long as you like, and give me your word not to try to get away, and you shall have the run of all the craft!"

Aungua hesitated, for this conversation had drawn his mind from sad thoughts; but the allusion to his captive state brought back the sea of perplexities and harassing thoughts about Domea.

"Come, youngster, give your word. I am determined to keep you safe until my job is done, so it's all the same one way; but it will be better for you." This was said sternly, and Aungua, seeing it useless to do otherwise than humour his captor, gave his word.

"That'll do, lad," said Grasper; "now get some sleep." And the smuggler left the cabin.

The discovery of Monchaboo's death, and the loss of the treasure, burst, as may be imagined, like a thunderbolt on the merchant's home, but in the midst of the confusion and wailing one heart alone truly mourned his loss. Poor Domea had tried in vain to gain her father's consent to her union with Aungua. Repulsed by his sternness and her step-



mother's harsh laughter, she had retired in tears to her sleeping apartment, where her maid used every effort to soothe her. In the dead of night the cry of grief awoke her.

Night shrouded the home, and within its veil I dare not gaze. By morning light, tranquillity was somewhat restored. The domestics had regained their national serenity, for their master was not well loved by them. The wife felt his loss as human nature must do, however distorted by custom and education, but the cloud soon passed over, and, according to Burmese formula, the native musicians commenced their gay serenade to the dead, for such a season seems to the Burmese a time of joviality.

Thoroughly enjoyed by all the domestics, this music grated discordantly on the ears of Domea, whose mind, enlightened by Christianity, saw death in far, far more solemn robes. The golden heaven of Meru, and the consignment of evil souls to the bodies of animals, were swept away as idle fantasies, and heaven and hell, with Jesus the blessed way of salvation from the one and entrance to the other, alone was clear to her mind. Why should those around her mourn the loss of the

departed? They saw only occasion for rejoicing and merriment.

Another and a far weightier blow had fallen on Domea. When day broke, she hastened to Momien with the sad news, and he sped up to the stockade for Aungua, but found from the warriors that their young chief had not returned all the night. Hastening back to Domea with this startling intelligence, they were both thrown into consternation. Dispatching his servant to the village, Momien waited anxiously, but he returned with intelligence that none had seen Aungua since the last day. Then Momien and Domea both hastened down the path, and poor Domea, amidst her tears and heart-breaking sobs, told of their last parting. Not a trace could be found, until at last, groping in the underwood of the copse, Momien espied something bright. It was Aungua's sword they saw at a glance. What could this mean? It would be vain to attempt following the conflicting thoughts of each. The storm seemed to have burst with all its fury when the sky looked brightest. Monchaboo dead and Aungua not to be found; no trace but the sword to all this mystery. Many and varied suggestions rose to Domea's lips.

One was, that her lover might have met, by some means, the retreating robbers who had attacked her father's house, and might not an encounter have ensued? Aungua, she knew, would flee from none, but numbers might overpower him, and the sword lent weight to this idea. If so, what direction did they take? who were they? and where now is Aungua?

Such thoughts coursed one after another through her puzzled brain, but Momien, although staggered at these sudden reverses, eagerly took in all that might be of use in unravelling this mystery. Finding their searches of no further avail, he conducted his charge, now more so than before, to her home, where, with many faithful lessons of hope and trust, and promises of fatherly protection, he left her, and returned to his own domicile to unburden his heart to Him whose eye seeth all things; and to reflect calmly on the strange events of the past few hours.

## CHAPTER X.

## BURNING THE DEAD.

NIGHT and day, day and night, the almost ceaseless music sounded gaily from the house of the dead at Kemmendine. The earthly tenement of the merchant had been kept until the third day; so long, that it would keep no longer. Grand preparations had been made for the coming event of burning the dead. The Seredan had visited his deceased brother's wife, and, offering her all the consolation his religion could afford, he left, determining to pay great honour to his departed brother; and for this purpose he arranged for the burning to take place at Rangoon.

Gaily the music floated on the sunny air on the morning of the funeral; busily the natives worked, and at last all was completed for the procession. The people of Kemmendine turned out in their gay day costumes for the occasion, and the village looked like a busy hive of bees. Priests from Shoodagon came in yellow-liveried troops, sent by their superior.

After the bustle of arranging the ceremonial had somewhat subsided, the priests formed in single file, and moved off. It was strange to see nearly twenty bareheaded, barefooted, and demure-faced priests marching slowly and sedately, whilst all around was fun and frolic. Then came a long line of youths and maids carrying a showy assortment of old Monchaboo's goods and chattels. Bunches of fruit, bundles of sugar-canes and cigars, mats, silks, fans, various vessels of use and ornament, all had places in the procession, being carried on poles, borne on the shoulders of the young bearers. A long line of these was followed by the chief mourners, being the old merchant's wife and some of her near kinsfolk. These seemed to make many lamentations and shed many tears. A huge gilt umbrella, carried on a lofty handle, towered above their heads. Behind these again, came the bier, the chief centre of attraction and merriment, borne on the shoulders of thirty men, dressed in gay attire, and with faces beaming with grins of delight, their mouths working vigorously at huge cigars. Borne on their shoulders was a large square platform, made of crossed bamboos, the ends protruding on all sides forming the handles, so to speak. On

this platform towered a lofty erection, wide at the base, but narrow at the top ; looking like coffins piled one upon another, and surmounted by the coffin of the deceased, above which was a gilt crown or cap terminating in a spire. Gaily painted with representations of angels and flowers, gilded with rich profusion, many projecting horns and many gay flags hung around with garlands and festoons of flowers, and with four wide-spread, tinsel wings extended from the corners—this was the gaudy bier. The rough platform was hidden from view by a snow-white cloth, extending from the base of the coffin-crowned tower to the border of the stage.

This bier was followed by a rude covered cart, very narrow, and drawn by two brown buffaloes. In this cart sat the musicians, playing their sometimes doleful strains, enlivened with frequent blasts from a rude horn.

Before, at the side, and behind this procession, were collected the gaping crowd, principally females, dressed in rich silk tameings, and decorated with gaudy jewels. All carried open palm-leaf umbrellas. Laughing, gazing, giggling, and smoking occupied all their time.

On moved the procession at a steady pace up the

path, narrow in itself, but wide enough to allow the bier and buffalo cart to travel on. A rough road it was, and slowly it wound up the hill. Momien's house was passed, and the old Christian gazed out on the gay parade of his idolatrous countrymen. He saw not Domea, indeed he scarcely expected to see her there, for her heart was not attuned to share in such an unholy and inhuman scene of frivolity around the dead. Over the brow of the hill they wended their way, and soon nothing was seen of the curious crowd, who, used to such journeys, footed the three miles bravely.

As soon as the last straggler disappeared, Momien left his house, and, with a light step, seldom seen in one of his age, he hurried down the path to Domea's home. Whilst the gay procession is threading its way through the jungle tract to Rangoon, let us follow Momien for a few moments.

This visit had been pre-arranged, that they might talk calmly over the strange events of the past few days; and Domea meeting her aged teacher at the garden entrance, conducted him in silence away from the almost deserted home, to a little secluded arbour, made of bamboo, covered with trailing flowers. As soon as they entered Domea burst into tears, and Momien, knowing it wiser to let her grief have way

for a time, continued silent some moments, when kindly taking her hand, he said, "My poor child, look up for strength ; this is a heavy trial for your young heart, and younger faith, but a bright light is in this cloud."

Domea lifted up her face to him. Three days of heart-breaking grief had dimmed her bright eyes, and thinned her round cheeks. Grief, unknown to her ignorant countrymen, had been making sad havoc, but now that Momien was near to advise, she felt she had some one to cheer and to help her. Leaning her aching head on his shoulder, she said, "Oh, good Momien, you are my only father on earth now. You must take me away from this place, for my poor heart is weary, how weary !"

"Take courage, my child," replied Momien, "our Lord puts his most faithful warriors in the hottest of the fray. He honours us when we are tried. Our blessed Master was so, and shall we be sad because we are permitted to be like Him? The brightest sun casts the deepest shadow, and these clouds will the more show forth the brightness of the light beyond. I have seen much, my daughter, and experienced much, but this I know, never will the Lord forsake His own, however tried they be, but in all times of distress He is an all-sufficient help. Times and cir-



cumstances, which, while the cloud endured, I fancied against me, I have soon praised God for His goodness in letting me have such dark-robed blessings."

"All this I feel, my father, but how can my poor heart help being cast down?" exclaimed Domea; "I grieve not for my poor father, as those who sorrow without hope. I dare not have one sorrowful thought, but leave it all in the hands of my heavenly Father. He is plenteous in mercy, and His ways are past finding out."

"They are indeed, my child; and now we are perplexed because we cannot find them out, let us not be discouraged."

"But, good Momien," said she, "when I think of my dear Aungua—not knowing whether he is alive, or—oh, father, this breaks my heart." Her head was again bowed, and a torrent of tears gushed out afresh.

"Here again, my child," said Momien, "we have a fresh cause to trust the loving guidance of our Lord. The way of these things we see not, but soon all will be clear. Endeavour, my daughter, to be cheered, and think as calmly as you can of these things, that we may consider well what is best to be done."

"I will try, good father," returned she, in a tone of resignation.

“ Well, then, my child,” continued the aged mentor, “ I have pondered over this mystery of Aungua’s absence, but no clue can I find to it. My poor mind sees no ray of light as yet. His sword, which we found, seems to signify that force was used, and to that his absence must be ascribed.”

“ Oh yes,” replied Domea, “ nothing would keep him away but that, and I cannot help thinking that his absence is in some way connected with my poor father’s murderers. I mean that he must have met them ; but then, Aungua should have been with his troop some hours before that occurred.”

“ Some other explanation we must find, my child. I have tried all in my power to gain information, but in vain. An inquiry is now being made for him in the army. I wish I knew this Berhing he spoke of, but I do not, neither do I know where to seek him.”

“ I know not either, good Momien,” said Domea ; “ all I know is from dear Aungua’s speaking of him. But, father, do you think, then, some other reason must be found than in his meeting with the robbers ?”

“ Yes, daughter, I am sure of it,” replied he, but with a great hesitation. The shrewd old pilgrim had well weighed the circumstance and their position, and he had no doubt but Aungua’s absence was in

some way connected with Monchaboo's dislike to him. This thought he dared not tell to poor Domea, whose heart would have been pained greatly with such an idea, but this made him less concerned about Aungua's safety, as he felt convinced he was merely confined somewhere; but where? ah, that was the problem he could not at present solve. "Another reason must be found," he continued, "but we must not fear for his safety. Aungua lacks not strength, courage, or shrewdness. But, my child, I am anxious to protect you. I fear more for you than for him."

"Oh, good father, I am so anxious about dear Aungua, that I have forgotten to tell you what has transpired. My uncle, the Seredan, has expressed his determination to take me under *his* charge. His intention is to keep me with the nuns that I may be weaned from the world, unless I choose a partner he may approve. All this he has arranged with my stepmother, and my maid Loo overheard it, and came at once to tell me."

"Indeed, Domea, my child, this is truly strange news. Has your stepmother said anything of this to you?"

"Yes," replied Domea, "and she treats me as a child. Ah, father, her heart is hardened. She laughs

at me, because dear Aungua has disappeared. Ah, Momien, she even said I should have no shelter under my father's own roof. She, a stranger to me, in all things so different from my own dear mother, to be mistress in my father's house, whilst his child is an outcast."

"All these things will soon turn out for our good," said Momien; "neither the high priest nor your step-mother can claim authority over you, my daughter. You have renounced their religion. You are my charge, my daughter. You must remove from this place, where I plainly see, my child, you will soon be tormented, if not driven forth. Come to my home, Domea. Bring your faithful maid, and be the mistress of my little dwelling. I will protect you, and soon, my child, I trust we shall hear of Aungua."

"Oh, Momien, you are indeed a father to me; so good, so kind. I was wishing for this long ago, and now I have no ties to bind me to this place. If dear Aungua had been here now, we would leave this very day. Ah, Momien, when I think of him, my poor heart is ready to break."

"Take courage, my child," replied he; "we know not but something connected with Berhing may have called him away suddenly, and left him no opportunity

of telling us. You must, when your stepmother returns, tell her your intention to come under my roof, and then, my daughter, we must remove your little goods away from this place."

"But, good Momien, if she objects to my going, or the Seredan should interfere?" said Domea.

"They can only rule you by fear, my child," he answered; "their anger will fall upon me, but I will shelter you."

In this manner the master and his pupil continued conversing, and his counsel tended greatly to cheer poor Domea's heart and make her hopeful. The funeral procession had by this time passed through the jungle track, which ran parallel with the river, about a mile and a half from Rangoon. Emerging from this track the vanguard of priests was met by other of their yellow-robed brotherhood, and as the bier and the buffalo cart, followed by the crowd, entered the town, throngs of gaily dressed natives swelled the procession. The Seredan's brother was to be burned! Everybody had heard the news on shore, and flocked to the grand sight. Here the priests and the bearers of the merchant's effects hastened on in advance to the scene of final dissolution. Now began the fun for those behind. The bearers of the

bier would run for several yards carrying the poor dead with them, then they would stop and dance from side to side of the road, all the while singing most lustily. They threw themselves into different attitudes, sometimes raising one leg and placing a hand on the knee whilst they sang, and at the chorus down went all legs with a stamp, amidst a loud shout, and so on with the other leg. Then again, they tried to advance, but some, apparently masters of the ceremonies, pushed them back, whilst others in the rear endeavoured to push them forward, as if the body under the influence of good and evil spirits was in great conflict. This would they do for some moments, the bearers being supplied with intoxicating drink frequently, until their merriment amounted almost to frenzy. Ceaseless sounded the music, adding to the far from harmonious din. Overcoming their opponents, the bearers would again run for several yards, carrying the high-crowned dead, and "rattling his bones over the stones" until the huge tower shook and trembled, as if about to topple down. Passing down the main street, through openings which led to the river-side, they could see the brigantine at anchor, her decks crowded with the curious seamen, who were attracted by the noise ashore, and who were watching the pass-

ing procession. Little did the natives think the cause of their present gaiety was that very vessel which so often drew their wondering gaze. As little did Aungua think in whose honour that procession was prepared, as he glanced now and then through a cabin port at the crowds on shore. It was a frequent sight to him, but such a concourse of people attracted even his attention.

With many such stoppages, advances, and retrograde motions, songs and dances, the procession passed through the streets of Rangoon, until, apparently tired, the bearers of the coffin dropped into a steady trot, followed by the musical car and the crowd, until they reached the spot outside the stockade, set apart for paying the Burmese last act of respect to the dead—burning them to ashes. Here the funeral pyre, a low stack of wood, was all prepared, and the Seredan himself, surrounded by a band of priests, was waiting to perform his sacred rites. Standing a little in the rear were the youths and maids, already noticed, with their burdens deposited on the ground. The earth, blackened in many places, showed where bodies had been consumed. The crowd kept at a respectful distance whilst the coffin-bearers lowered the stage to the earth, soon dismantling it of all its gaudy trap-

pings ; these were put aside for another like occasion, but the stage itself was broken up for fuel, and the coffin placed on the pyre. The presence of the high priest seemed to still the hilarity of the crowd, and a solemn scene ensued. At the head of the coffin stood the Seredan and his priests, while at the foot knelt the wife and relatives of poor Monchaboo, making low sounds of mourning. The priest addressed a few words to the mourners, and then prayed solemnly to his god Guadama. Whilst doing this, the crowd nearest the coffin remained silent ; but those more remote from the awing glance of the high priest cracked their jokes and laughed merrily. The prayer ended, all rose, and the dead was exposed to view by lifting off the coffin lid. The mourners now passed around it one by one slowly to take a last look, and then each dipping a bunch of leaves into a bowl of holy water held by a priest, again passed around, sprinkling the water over the body, singing or chanting a prayer. This done, the wife, followed by her companions, took a brand from a small fire kindled near, and applied it to the pyre. In a few minutes the flames gained force and blazed high, cracking and hissing around the coffin. Merrily shouted the noisy crowd and brightly blazed the fire, until pyre and



coffin were one sheet of flame. The fire burned fiercely for some time, but then began to slacken and die away. The crowd left the spot, no longer interesting now the fun was over, and the priests collected in an urn the charred remains of the *once* praise-loving, honour-idolizing merchant. Those remains will be sealed, and placed in the safe keeping of the Inauaddenier, or buried at the base of Shoodagon, the loved resting-place of the Buddhist, as may be decided on.

Although but thirty years have elapsed since the Burman emperor, Alompra, built Rangoon on the ruins of Singounterra, a large and wealthy town, we find it now an extensive and populous city. The town itself, consisting chiefly of bamboo huts and teak buildings raised on piles, is nearly a mile or more in extent; that is, the buildings on the river side extend to this distance. The city, or rather citadel, is a square defended by a high stockade, having two gates on the north side, but with only one on the east and west. The northern side is also further strengthened by a deep trench bridged over, and stages are raised in many places for the purpose of defence. Within this stockade is the fort, presenting a battery of sixteen old and almost useless guns towards the river. Here also is a fine pier and landing-place.

Within the precincts of the fort the officials of government, the native gentry, and all important persons reside, whilst the suburbs are given up to the lower classes. Some of the houses of Rangoon are roofed with good burnt tiles. The streets are narrow, but well paved with bricks. The road leading to Shoo-dagon is wide and paved. Kyoungs in great number are in this direction shaded by fine trees. On both sides are many spires containing images of Guadama in niches. The population of Rangoon at the time of this tale amounted to nearly thirty thousand souls.

The excitement of the burning passed away, and as the evening advanced, the Burmese youths assembled in the narrow streets in groups, playing merry games at football. Could we have peeped into the native gardens, we should have seen many, of both sexes and all ages, seated in swings, enjoying their rides and their cigars in peaceful glee, for this is a favourite national amusement.

Soon these scenes were shifted, and as night advanced the footballs ceased to be hurled, and the swings were unemployed, but in the streets many lamp-lighted stalls for the sale of fruits, sweetmeats, and cigars, were tended by women, and the streets promenaded by many gay-dressed gossips. Deeper

grew the shades of night, and one by one the lamps disappeared and the stalls were deserted, until not a single being paraded the streets. Snarling pariah dogs by hundreds now issued forth from beneath the houses, to fight over the refuse in the roads, mingling their yells with the dismal howls of distant jackals, and with the thrilling music which, rising on the silent midnight air, gave solemn notice that some native's soul had departed hence—but where?

The busy town was deep in slumber; many, perhaps, dreaming of the horrors of the coming war, when families will be kept as hostages for the good conduct and bravery of husbands, brothers, and fathers; and, maybe, wives, sisters, mothers, and children will be cruelly massacred if such bravery fails. Many, perhaps, are dreaming of brighter things: of hours of pleasure, and scenes of delight. All, however, were not slumbering; for, in the darkness, two mantled figures were hastening towards the river from the direction of Shoodagon. Reaching the river, they launched one of the many canoes on its bank, and paddled noiselessly towards the opposite side of the stream where the *Saucy Jane* lay anchored.

In a very brief time the canoe returned, but carry-

ing three instead of two, and closely followed by the brigantine's gig, pulled by four seamen. The third occupant of the canoe was Aungua, and his companions the priests Koonah and Guhlinugah. Poor Aungua had been deceived in his new-found friend, for although treated with kindness by the smuggler before, yet, as this evening advanced, his guards were more strict and his liberty curtailed. In vain he sought an explanation, for the smuggler captain was stern and harsh. Before the canoe arrived alongside, he had been roughly handled again, and his hands bound, thus leaving him helpless. The priests he saw not, for he was blindfolded and placed in the canoe, which he felt skimming over the river. In what direction they went he knew not, and when landed, a low voice in his native tongue bade him keep silent, or his life would be taken. Surrounded by the priests and smugglers as a body-guard, he was walked for a long distance. His unshod feet treading on the paved road, gave him a clue to where he was. Aungua possessed all the characteristic sagacity of the Burman. From the time he was on the water he knew he must be in Rangoon, as Dallas, on the other side of the river, was a mere unpaved village. But what road, and whither leading? This, too, his quick

senses discovered. He felt he was gradually ascending some gentle hill, and after nearly half an hour's walk, as far as he could judge, he was ascending long flights of steps; stone he felt they were by his feet. Where could this be? None but Shoodagon was approached in this manner, but this could not be. What connexion had the heathen temple with his capture? Ah, the priest! Thought after thought flashed across Aungua's mind, and his captors little fancied their precautions so useless. The priests had underrated their countryman's cunning and shrewdness, for in spite of his unwillingness to couple his present situation with the priesthood, link after link all tended to make him believe he was ascending the steps of Shoodagon.

Soon his conclusions received an abrupt check. The steps passed, he knew by the warm air he was being conducted through some apartment, and just at the moment, the passing breath of wind caught the bells high up on the lofty pinnacle, and sent a merry peal sounding sweetly through the building. This had caught Aungua's ear, but before he could add it to his long list of links, he felt he was descending winding steps. Down, step after step, he was compelled to go. He felt the air close, and

heard the chirp of many lizards. Where could this be? He knew not of such a place, for the priests guarded well the entrance to these vaults; and although popular belief filled the ground beneath the mighty pagoda with countless treasures, still none but the priests knew of their existence. This was a check to Aungua's conclusions, but before he could arrange these opposing evidences he was brought to a sudden halt. They had reached the low-arched door, which we have already seen in the vaults of the pagoda. Producing a huge key, Koonah applied it, and the ponderous lock turned heavily back. Opening the massive door, the priests led their captive through a vaulted passage of some thirty feet in length. This passage was crossed by another of a similar kind, but a few paces in each was a strong iron-bound door. The passage we have entered from the first door continues onward a few more feet, until it terminates in a kind of rude hall, the roof being higher, but still arched, and the sides wide apart. In the three sides are low passages, and at the end of each is a heavy door. Stopping with their prisoner before the one right facing them, the priests unbolted the door, for it was fastened from without, and entered a large but ill-shapen cell, being a rude ex-

cavation of the earth. Thrusting in their prisoner, they lighted a small oil lamp, standing in a niche of the wall, and unfastening the cords round Aungua's arms they retreated. His first impulse was to drag off the bandage from his eyes, but before he could distinguish the retreating forms in his confusion, the massive door was closed with a clang, and poor Aungua heard the bolts shut one by one into their sockets, and then the frightful fact that he was helpless and entrapped burst like an avalanche on his already bewildered mind.

## CHAPTER XI.

## DEEPER PLOTS.

THE stars in the east were beginning to grow pale, and the clouds hanging near the horizon to become tinted with faint hues, as the high priest of Buddha walked moodily beneath the shady tamarind trees of the garden around his dwelling. The house of the Seredan was in itself a monastery; but here only a few of the superior Rhahaans lived, whilst the main body of the priests were collected in numerous kyoungs in the town, and many slept and watched by turns in the temple hall itself. With head bent low, and arms folded, the Seredan walked in deep meditation, for which his mind had ample food. A man of intense zeal, he sought to increase the glory of his god by every means in his power. Ostensibly shunning the world and its dross, and not mixing with its turmoils, he now found himself greedy of gain, and deep in schemes of cunning. Like the Pharisees of old, he, as a type of his order, "will strain



at a gnat, whilst he swallows a camel." Kindling no fires, lest they should thus destroy some insect, the Buddhist priests scruple not to gain great power over the emperor and the people, and use it for the purpose of fomenting war and anarchy throughout the land. Greatly revered by the mass of the people, no one would dare to level a suspicion against their goodness and purity of life. Such was the Seredan. Waking, he thought of how his idol could be enriched, and sleeping, his dreams often were of the same kind. Such a thought in connexion with the occurrences of the past days now occupied his mind. Thus far, all had gone well; and by this time, the youth Aungua he knew must be somewhere beneath Shoodagon. He had not yet seen his tools, but doubtless all had gone well. Will he detain his prisoner for long? This he knows not. He must be kept away until Domea is wedded to the powerful rival, and then his mouth must be sealed, lest he should unfold all that he knows of the Seredan's dealings. How can this be done? Either he must be bound by frightful oaths to secrecy, or else he must *never leave the vaults!* Murder, the high priest never once intended, for was not killing against his creed? But to confine his prisoner for

life, and to endeavour to win him from the world to Guadama? ah! that were indeed an action deserving praise, and he doubted not would meet with reward hereafter.

But more troublesome clouds are gathering round. After the burning of his deceased brother yesterday, the Seredan had an interview with the widow at Kemmendine, he having proceeded there with the holy purpose of arranging for Domea becoming his charge at the nunnery. He then heard of her determination to leave her home, and seek the protection of her Christian mentor, Momien. Domea had boldly disowned his authority, and claimed Momien as her protector. This had thrown a new feature over the whole affair. If Momien chooses to remove his pupil away, all his planning will have been in vain. The bait removed, how can he expect that his prey, the wealthy Munris, will bite? What then must be done?

Such were the thoughts that filled the mind of Buddha's high priest, as he took his solitary walk; his fruitful brain soon decided on the course to be pursued. Was not the rival, Munris, the Maywoon of the grand province of Prome?

The emperor had issued his commands to his vice-

roys, and they in their turn began levying troops for the war, and the warriors inland were flocking towards Martaban. The boatmen who had descended the river from the capital, Ummerapura, had brought intelligence of this movement, and as they passed the city of Prome in their downward course, they heard that the viceroy was assembling his feudal lords and their followers, and sending them to Danoobyoo, still further down the river, as a smaller rallying point; his intention being to take them in a body from thence down the Irrawaddy, pass Rangoon, and so around to Martaban, to join the emperor.

Now the town of Danoobyoo is only sixty miles from Rangoon, northward, and the Seredan determined to dispatch a messenger there, hoping he would thus meet Munris, who would be induced to visit him before the troops came down, and by this means they could make all necessary arrangements. No sooner was this plan conceived than adopted. Leaving the garden, the Seredan sent for the priest Koonah, and after hearing of his success and directing his companion, Guhlinugah to attend to the prisoner, he dispatched the priest in a well manned canoe to the town of Danoobyoo.

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The messenger fortunately found the viceroy there, for he had preceded the remainder of his troops, that he might inspect those already assembled. Interests dearer than the war made him easily leave his post, and giving those next in command full directions for the transporting of the troops, he laid aside his dignity and, taking only two attendants, seated himself in the priest's canoe.

Three days after the canoe had left Rangoon it returned, bearing its distinguished occupant, for they had made all dispatch.

The Seredan's dwelling consisted of many magnificent apartments, one of which we have seen. Some of the rooms had richly gilded roofs supported by many fine carved pillars. His sleeping apartment was equally superb; and over his bed projected a many-roofed, gilded crown, or *piasath*, with the sacred tee, terminating in a long spire. This *piasath* is a mark of honour allowed only to the Emperor and the Seredan, and not even enjoyed by the emperor's son. Indeed, the high priest, although as humble in manners and dress as the other priests, ranks second only to the lord of the whole empire. His attendants, all priests, are very numerous. Attached to this dwelling, but in the rear, was a large

pillared hall, with walls profusely carved, but containing no furniture. Mats strewn on the floor, form the seats and beds of the Rhahaans, who live here, this being their monastery.

Munris hastened to the abode of the Seredan, and was met at the entrance by the priest himself, before whom he bowed in reverence. Respect for the priesthood, coupled with selfish motives, prompted this humility in the Maywoon, for he knew the emperor's ear was always opened to the holy father before him. Giving a few words of greeting, the Seredan preceded his visitor into the apartment we have before seen, where both seated themselves. Munris is a short but stout Burman, with coarse features, and beardless face. His dress is simple, but characteristic, consisting of a silk pateo round the loins, and a long tight sleeved muslin coat, with a rich turban on his head, and the usual gold cigar tubes in the lobes of his ears. This, in fact, is the dress of all persons of rank in private. After Munris was refreshed, he was most liberally supplied with food, which he as liberally devoured. A few remarks from both parties, relative to the common subject of topic, the coming war, and of the merchant's death, introduced the matter so close at the

priest's heart. "Doubtless, my son," said he, with a meek and fatherly tone, "doubtless, you have divined my reasons for calling you here in such haste?"

"From the messenger I ascertained it was about that which is of such interest to me, good father," replied Munris, with a voice subdued in the presence of the priest, but still very pompous.

"It is a subject of interest to me, my son, as touching the honour of Guadama. I know also how dear it is to you, and this is a great reason why I interest myself. Your welfare and prosperity, my son, who should be zealous of, if not I?"

"Ah, holy father," replied Munris, "none serve Guadama so well as you. Well may the people style you 'father,' for such you are."

Receiving this flattering homage with an air of deep humility, the Seredan replied, "Your flattery is unmerited, my son; but let me now enter into the subject more particularly. My brother, Monchaboo, had given you his gentle daughter, Domea, in promise, but not until this expedition should have returned. Am I correct, my son?"

"It is so, father; and I trust the death of my friend and your brother will in no wise interfere

with the fulfilment of his promise," said Munris, with great anxiety.

"That I will undertake," replied the high priest. "The vow of my brother I will fulfil."

The Maywoon's eyes beamed afresh as he heartily thanked his priestly friend and heaped flatteries upon him ; which, although received with apparent meekness, lodged in the priest's heart, and he continued, "One thing, my son, you have never heard of, the difficulty which Monchaboo has contended with to fulfil his vow. You have been so far removed from Kemmendine, and this difficulty is little known beyond his house."

"What difficulty do you mean, good father?" asked Munris.

"A rival, my son !"

"A rival ! and who dares to look at her whom the Maywoon of Prome has chosen to be his wife ? Tell me, holy father, who this bold poltroon is ; and if he has so dared, he shall feel my anger !"

His pride was roused, and there is no knowing to what extent it would have led him, had not the gentle, rebuking look of the priest calmed his rising temper.

"Meekness, my son ; listen with meekness whilst I

tell you briefly who this mistaken youth is. You know him well by name. It is the youth Aungua."

"The young warrior, whose name is so well known for bravery, and yet for his renouncing our religion?"

"The same, Munris; it is the same," replied the priest. "Domea and he have been brought up together from childhood, and under the evil teaching of an old renegade from our blessed worship, who was once indeed a priest of Shoodagon, they have forsaken our creed. This would have been of little importance, had Monchaboo lived to assert his authority over Domea, but now he has gone she has disowned all authority of either myself or her mother. This, my son, is somewhat of the trouble."

The viceroy had listened to this with staring eyes and silent amazement. So engaged with his duties, and removed so far from Kemmendine, he had heard little of these things, and that little not sufficient to cause him alarm. He had a deep passion for Domea, but his intended alliance with her had been a mere business transaction with her parent. He knew not of her dislike to him, and indeed he cared not, if his desires were satisfied. Before he could reply the Seredan continued, "Let me tell thee, my son,



all of the matter, and then we must talk of it together. The clouds have been gathering fast, and even now Domea has left her home and sought a shelter with the renegade I mentioned."

"And the presumptuous boy, where is he?" asked Munris, striving to keep down his fast-rising passion and pride.

"Ah, my son, here is a mystery! Since the night when Monchaboo was murdered he has been missing. No one at Kemmendine can tell of his proceedings or where he is. It may be, my son, that he is but making secret arrangements for removing Domea from Kemmendine entirely, and thus thwart your plans. Such a reason I give with diffidence. We must be full of charity, and impute not evil to others; but this boy has left the truth, and to judge him thus is not amiss."

Munris replied not for some seconds, but his passions were raging within him. His dignity was indeed assailed. A mere captain of a troop, and a deserter from his religion, to dare glance at her whom a Maywoon of Burmah had selected! Ah! it was fortunate his rival was out of harm's reach with respect to him. At last he spoke to the Seredan,

hastily, "What is to be done, good father? Domea shall be mine, and you have promised."

"Nay, my son, it ill becomes the high priest of Buddha to mix with worldly affairs. I have told you the threatening danger, as my sense of duty prompted me to do. It is for you, my son, to meet them. I give you Domea, taking upon myself to fulfil my brother's vow; but the means you must look to. Still I am greatly interested. My desire is to reclaim those wandering children, to bring them back to Guadama's worship again; and hence my anxiety to assist you. As a father, I watch over your interests, my son."

"Many, many thanks, great Seredan," returned the Maywoon, "and glad am I that you have summoned me hither. I must act with speed. But this boy, I should like to know where he lurks. Ah! I can cripple his endeavours to thwart me, if he returns not to his post. My troops shall march at once, and his I will command to join them; and he must appear, or he is a traitor!"

"Nay, nay, my son," replied the priest; "evil designs should not lurk in your heart. Injure not the misguided boy, for he has injured himself deeply."

His absence on the very night of Monchaboo's murder is strange."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Maywoon, rubbing his hands with glee as he heard this, but he gave no expression to his thoughts. He saw the net becoming more entangling round his prey, but reverence for the priest made him conceal his delight. A cunning plan was instantly formed in his brain, and he was longing to hasten its execution; but the Seredan had not yet done with him, and he adroitly turned the conversation to the merits of the late merchant. Munris, compelled by courtesy, listened to the priest's long and glowing eulogy, and his many well-meant allusions to the necessity of a godly life. Symoo Seredan's fault lay in his intense zeal for his religion which led him astray, but he was nevertheless sincere, and longed to draw others into a holy and priestly life. His listener was not so well content to be preached to. Other subjects of stirring interest filled his heart and mind.

"Ah, my son," said the priest, coming slowly but surely to his main point—"ah, my son, Monchaboo had a noble heart beneath a worldly mask. Much wealth did he largely give away. Our festivals he contributed to. Indeed, without him we should have

lacked much. Shoodagon, too, received largely of his bounty. I remember now at our last meeting, my son, it was in this very room, he promised greatly to enrich our honoured temple and shrine, if some undertaking should succeed. He has departed for Meru's Hill before his promise could be fulfilled."

Totally unsuspecting of the priest's motives, Munris felt his pride lowered by being behind the merchant, and with a readiness which astonished the Seredan, he exclaimed, "You, good father, have promised to fulfil Monchaboo's promise, and I will fulfil his also, and Shoodagon shall be enriched. At the conclusion of this war (and our victorious arms will soon be triumphant), and when Domea has become mine, then, holy father, my promise shall be redeemed with true liberality."

Appearing pleasantly surprised, the priest replied, "May Guadama bless and prosper you, my son. Your heart is truly rich, and such an holy desire I would not check."

Seizing the opportunity, Munris, glad to escape even at the cost of some wealth, bade adieu to the high priest, and hastened into the town, followed by his attendants, towards the port, to carry out his new-

formed project. Unknown to the crowd, in his plain apparel, the pompous Maywoon elbowed his way until he reached the fort, where he was at once recognised and saluted. Many Burmese warriors, armed with spears, bows and arrows, swords, and rude muskets, are gathered about in groups talking gaily. Stepping up to one of these warriors, who bent lowly in obeisance, Munris asked in a tone of authority, "Has the Arracanese band arrived?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the warrior.

"Where is their chief?" asked Munris.

"I know not, my lord. He came with his warriors, when they first arrived, and then left, going up the river."

Leaving him with an expression of disappointment, the Maywoon, passing the many warriors about, entered without ceremony a moderately sized house, or rather shed, for it contained but one apartment, of the rudest kind. Arms of all kinds, with horse trappings, were hanging about the walls, and in the centre of the apartment several young warrior-chiefs were intent on a game of chess, their board being on the ground, and they reclining lazily around. Seeing the Maywoon, they started to their feet, and bent humbly before that haughty dignity, rather surprised at

his appearance. Putting the same questions to them as he had put to the warrior he first addressed, he was informed that the chief he sought had been expected the preceding day, and was fully expected then. Apparently more satisfied with this, the Maywoon bade them to send the chief immediately on his return to the Seredan's abode, where he would await him. Passing a few pompous and condescending remarks to the chiefs, Munris again left. By this time the news had spread among the people, who crowded to see one of Burmah's great feudal chiefs, and many knees were bent, and many hands raised in token of respect, as he wended his way back to the monastery.

Here he waited long and impatiently. Hours passed, but still no chief appeared. Until long after the sun had passed the meridian the long-expected warrior was announced, and was ushered into the apartment the Maywoon occupied. He was a tall, muscular man, apparently very athletic; dark skinned, like the Burmese, but with a large flattened forehead, and large ears and wide nostrils. He wore a red checked turban; coarse white tunic, or shirt, reaching below the loins, and with short sleeves exposing strong, sinewy arms. A putso of coloured cloth, similar to the Burmese, and stout sandals of coarse hide com-

pleted the dress of the Arracanese chief. Slung at his back was a round buffalo hide target; at his side, a heavy, curved sword, and a long, sharp-pointed spear, or javelin, in his hand. Not even the sacred precincts of the monastery induced him to lay aside his weapons. In his large, dark eyes there was a bold defiant look, and he glanced around the apartment with an air of suspicion, although there was something open and candid in his face, which was pleasing and manly, owing no doubt to expression, which overcomes cast of features. Munris Maywoon and the chief had met oftentimes before, and the Viceroy greeted him with a familiarity and warmth little expected from one of his rank. The greeting was returned by the chief, frankly but proudly, and they both passed into the grounds of the monastery. Near the middle of the garden was a gentle grassy knoll, with a fine tamarind tree rising in the centre; here the priests delighted to retire for hours to meditate over the wonders of the Damathal; and here the Maywoon and the warrior seated themselves, the latter planting his spear in the ground at his side, and resting his target against it.

"I have sent for you, bold chief of the mountains, because I want your aid," began Munris, when they

were seated. "It is a task I would rather entrust to yourself, and will richly reward you."

"What may the mighty lord of Prome require?" asked the mountaineer.

Dropping his voice, the Viceroy spoke for several minutes in an earnest tone, whilst the chief listened attentively; and when the speaker paused for a reply, he remained in deep thought a few seconds.

"I undertake the task," at length he said, "and all you desire shall be done; but my followers, must they proceed to the war?"

"Some must," returned Munris: "it was our Boa's command to have the brave warriors of Arracan, but there is no need for all. I will arrange that."

"I fear," returned the chief, "that your officers and my men will never agree; they are accustomed to be led by their own chiefs."

"Well, brave chief of Yumadong, let them be led by their own. Place one of your own choosing in command," said Munris, who was remarkably accommodating, and in truth he had occasion to be, for besides his present need of the chief, he did not forget that the Arracanese were a newly conquered race, and as yet not entirely subdued. These arrangements, satisfactory to both, being concluded, Munris con-



tinued, in a louder tone—"Carry out my instructions without delay, and let not a sound escape you of this. Travel with caution, and abide at your own village of Aeng until you either hear from me or see me there."

For some little time they continued conversing, until the advancing night reminded the Maywoon of his martial duties. He now arose, followed by the hardy mountain chief, who resumed his shield and spear, and they left the garden. As they entered the monastery, the priest, Koonah, stepped out from the thick shrubbery, where he had lain during their conversation. He went there with the innocent intention of having an idle lounge, and thus heard the greater part of their plans. What he heard caused a grin of cunning and delight to spread over his coarse features; and inwardly delighted with his silent share in the meeting, he leisurely followed their steps, and entered the kyoung.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE ABDUCTION.

THE humble home wherein the good old pilgrim Momien, had spent so many peaceful years ought not to be passed by without a slight description. It was small, built of wood and thatched with leaves, very little removed from the rough track. It stood a little back, with a grassy spot between, whereon the children daily gathered. It was on the right hand as you walked up the narrow road, and at its rear and sides was a small well-wooded garden. In this elevated position, there being no fear of inundations as in the plain below, Momien's house was built close on the ground. In front were two venetian windows and a small central door; the roof inclined at both sides. The interior arrangements were remarkably simple and comfortable. From the door a passage extended through the house into the garden behind. About the middle of this passage it expanded right and left into a small

lobby or hall. This passage divided the house into two parts, which were again subdivided, making in all four small apartments, independent of the little hall. The front windows lighted two of these rooms; back windows lighted the others, and the hall was made light and airy by the open door leading into the garden. The front rooms were used for sitting-rooms, and the others by Momien and his man-servant as sleeping apartments. Behind the house was a detached kitchen. In the sitting-rooms were rude tables and low couches, with floors matted, and walls bare. In Momien's dormitory was a bed or couch, whilst the other had merely a mat to sleep on. Boxes for containing apparel and what little property they possessed, umbrellas, and many little articles, with books, completed the household furniture of Momien's home; little enough, but sufficient.

But where are the inmates? Entering the rooms in succession we find none; but observe in the sitting room a small loom for weaving, used by Burmese females; and we see that Momien's apartment contains more property than he himself possesses. Boxes and apparel are in abundance; whilst on the bed is a native patola, or guitar. Passing through the house we approach the kitchen, which is merely a respectable

shed. Here an old Burman is employed in cooking the morning meal, whilst he smokes and sings alternately. A careless, merry soul is he, taking no thought of the morrow. Entering the little garden, which is almost a forest in itself, we thread our way to the end, passing the indispensable swing hanging from the trees. Low voices fall on our ears, and rounding a clump of shrubs, we come suddenly upon Momien and Domea, seated on mats spread on the grass; whilst lying open at Momien's feet is his Bible. There is little change in their costume. The old man has been playing a Burmese flageolet, or pullaway, but now it is on the ground, and he is talking to his gentle charge at his side. She is wholly his charge now, for during the three days we have been absent, she removed to Momien's care with her maid, and this accounts for the various articles seen within.

"Our being left so quiet and unmolested, dear child, and there having been no opposition whatever made to your becoming my charge, makes me suspicious: I like it not."

"Ah, good father," replied Domea, whose eyes were now unfilled with tears, not because she ceased to mourn her loved one's absence, but grief had taken

a deeper course. Tearless, it ran its silent way, undermining that gentle girl's heart, and if unchecked soon her frail body must sink under it. A low, meek, and scarcely audible voice, speaking with great exertion, with that thin, saddened face alone betokens grief. "Ah, good father, was it not the same before? Our plans were so bright, and no cloud was to be seen; but in an evil hour all, all was destroyed. Oh, father, six long weary, weary days have passed by; this is the seventh, and no Aungua!"

"Patience and faith, my daughter; we must pray for faith. The cloud is indeed black, and no ray seems to cheer us, but all will be well. Day after day have I wandered seeking information, but I can gain none. Few trouble themselves about it. The troops are passing daily down the river, and the vain festivals are coming off; all seem busy about this. After our humble meal, my child, I will go again, and this time I will go to Rangoon, as I hope there to find Luong, Aungua's foster parent. The old warrior loves the boy well, and he may see in this what we cannot see; but I fear he cannot himself render direct help. I would rather also, Domea, that we could remove from here. I like

not the high priest. From experience I know the deception of the Buddhist priesthood."

"Oh, Momien!" replied Domea, "let us not leave here. Poor Aungua would then not know where to find us, and I feel assured we shall soon hear of him. Something within tells me to hope. Do you not remember, my father, dear Aungua's feeling of coming danger? Ah, how true it was!"

"Yes, daughter, it was strange," said Momien. "Superstition I like not at all; but I sometimes think that we, who are guided by the Holy Spirit of God, are oftentimes warned to keep from this, or prompted to do that, by an evident power. It is wise to obey such promptings, when we see they are not proceeding from our erring hearts. In days gone by, I doubt not, dear child, indeed Scripture tells us, that men were guided in divers manners, by dreams and visions, and such inward promptings; but now our guide is the Holy Word of God. Therein, my dear daughter, is all we need for guidance here; only we must take its simple teachings into a simple heart. It is wrong and unwise to endeavour to interpret it according to our mistaken reason. The blessed Word was written for plain, wayfaring creatures, and blessed are those who read it with childish confidence, simplicity, and

belief. What a comfort it is to us that, in the midst of such ignorance and gross darkness as now entomb our poor countrymen, we have the light."

"It is indeed a great blessing," Domea replied, "and one we cannot be too grateful to God for. It cheers me when I think that dear Aungua knows the 'truth, as it is in Jesus.' Oh, father, when you go away, I trust you will hear good news, and hasten back to me. I dread being here alone."

"Fear not, my child," returned Momien, "fear not; you will be safe here; but now let us go in."

Leaving the garden, they entered the house, and in the usual sitting room the servant had prepared their humble meal: a dish of rice and curried vegetables. Seating themselves, and taking a carved platter of wood, they commenced eating, using their fingers in primitive style, whilst the attendant squatted himself on the floor at a like occupation, for there was no pride in Momien. They were too few, he said, to be divided.

It was a task to poor Domea. Willingly would she have sat day after day, thinking and longing to hear of Aungua, heedless of food, but to please Momien she persevered.

Scarcely had the meal begun, when a well-dressed

woman entered. She was garbed in white jacket and coloured taming, with a scarf passed over her breast, and the ends flowing behind ; her hair combed back in the usual style, and an umbrella in her hand to protect her from the sun. As she entered, rather hastily, Domea dropped her platter, and half rose from her seat, whilst Momien ceased eating, and even the industrious Burman on the floor paused to look up.

“ You have news, good Loo,” said Domea.

“ Yes, dear mistress, I have news,” replied the woman addressed ; “ but it is not very good.”

“ What is it, then ?” asked Momien.

“ I went down into the village,” answered the maid, “ to make what inquiries I could, but I could hear nothing ; the talk is all about the festival which will commence to-morrow, and we are to have the races at the same time.”

“ Never mind those gaities, Loo,” remarked her mistress ; “ tell me the news which you said you have heard.”

“ Well, dear mistress,” replied Loo, “ hearing nothing in the village, I sauntered down to the river’s side, where many people were gathered, watching the canoes going down with the warriors. Whilst there,



I heard some boatmen talking, and, getting near, I heard one say that yesterday a large canoe passed down towards Rangoon, and they saw a priest in it, and a man whom one said he recognised to be the Maywoon of Prome."

Momien looked at Domea, and she looked at him in return, both with surprise. The hated rival at Rangoon, in company with a priest, too ; what could that mean ? Before they could speak, the maid continued : " After I heard this, I left them, and then heard from some warriors that the horse troop on the hill was ordered to march at once to Rangoon, and they said the Maywoon really was at Rangoon yesterday, but he left the same day."

" My child, I will hasten away at once," said Momien, who had thought for a moment over this strange news, and a desire to sift this further at once possessed him. " I think, Domea," he continued, " that I have a clue at last to Aungua's mysterious absence. I will tell you all on my return ; and do you keep within doors, daughter." Rising from his unfinished meal, the old Christian donned his turban, and hurried away to the river's side.

Domea continued questioning her maid, who fell to on the viands with a hearty good-will, second only to

the man-servant, who, having finished to his heart's content, went out to enjoy his cigar, and a lazy swing, leaving the female attendant to clear away.

Leaving them all, we will follow Momien. On the river bank was a small canoe, which he called his own. Passing through the busy village, greeted by many little ones as he went by, the old pilgrim gained his canoe, and pushed off. An idea had struck him, giving force to his former suspicion, that Monchaboo had, in some way or another, caused the disappearance of Aungua; but now a greater light was dawning upon that idea. Until the intelligence which he heard from Domea's maid, he had thought no more of his first idea, and considered himself quite bewildered; but the appearance of the rival, and in company with a priest, were strong links. He knew well the jealousy and anger of the priesthood at their leaving the Buddhist creed, and he knew the terrible sway the Seredan possessed over the Emperor. With all these links, and this reasoning, Momien had not for a moment thought the priests would confine Aungua, although he knew well the vaults beneath the pagoda, but he never spoke of them to any one. Such revelations, useful to none, would be certain destruction to himself, he well knew.

Thinking deeply of these matters, as he paddled his frail canoe over the water, Momien passed the heavier boats, some laden with singing troops, until about a third of the distance was gone over, when he saw a large canoe rowing steadily up the river towards him. They soon met and passed, and Momien, giving a hasty glance, saw a war canoe of small size, containing about fifty remarkably well-made warriors, some rowing and some quietly seated. In the stern was the mountain chief we have before seen. These were some of his followers, clothed and armed similar to himself, but bearing also long bows with well-filled quivers at their side. They passed, and shot rapidly away in the distance, whilst Momien's canoe skimmed swiftly on, and he soon reached his destined place. Fastening his little vessel at the principal landing-place, he ascended the steps, and passing the large houses used by merchants as exchanges, he made his way to the fort. Unheeded by the others, he passed group after group of armed men, and asking each for the man, Luong, whom he sought, he at last found him, when a mutual recognition took place.

Luong was apparently as old as Momien, but he was a veteran, hardy and resolute. To his charge had Aungua been committed when a boy, and he

had of course trained his pupil to be a warrior, but their different ranks and posts had separated them often, and now Luong felt an affection for his protégé; but this had been lessened by Aungua's becoming a Christian; although the old veteran was proud to hear his boy's name coupled with the bravest of Burmah. Towards Momien he felt great jealousy, but now he had heard of Aungua's disappearance he forgot all differences, and the two old men wandered away to a retired spot to compare notes.

"Luong," said Momien to the old warrior, who was vigorously chewing his betelnut; "Luong, you are well experienced in all the devices of war, and I know of no one so well capable of solving this strange disappearance of poor Aungua as you."

"You speak the truth, Momien," replied he, with national conceit; "if any man in Burmah can unravel a riddle, it is Luong. I will find it out, if it is to be found out, but I have not known all the particulars. The boy has gone, and that some dog accuses him of being a coward and a traitor, is all I have heard. My boy a coward! if I had him here who said so, I would make him unsay his words; that would I."

"When was that reported?" asked Momien, who had not heard such a thing mentioned before.

"I heard it this day," replied Luong, "and heard more than that."

"What did you hear, good Luong?"

"I heard," said he, "I heard Aungua's name foully coupled with the murder of the old merchant and the robbery of his house. I have given them the lie until my tongue is weary." The veteran was in a great rage to think of such imputations being cast on his protégé's fame, and had the slanderer been there and known, his life would surely have been forfeited.

Momien could not reply for some moments. He was thunderstruck at this fresh news, and dreaded lest it should reach Domea's ears, as he feared it soon must, if he allowed her to remain at Kemmendine. That he at once determined upon should not be. At length he spoke, and they both continued conversing of this for some time, when Momien remarked—

"I will tell you, Luong, my suspicions. You know our boy loved this merchant's daughter, but he would not consent to their marriage."

"And why not have my boy, I would ask?" interrupted the veteran; "Aungua is not lacking in birth. Ah, those merchants and lords are proud upstarts, and they would grind us into dust."

"He was proud," continued Momien, "and refused

to sanction their union, but they were determined this should not prevent it, and I have no doubt the maiden's father caused Aungua's capture, and removed him to make way for the rival whom he had chosen."

"Rival, who is he?" asked Luong.

"The Maywoon of Prome," replied Momien.

"The Maywoon of Prome!" exclaimed the veteran, with great surprise. "Oh, now I see the reason of this. What can my poor boy do against him? The Maywoon was here but yesterday, and ordered the boy's troop to march, and of course Aungua, not appearing, has been branded as a traitor and deserter."

"Where did the Maywoon rest whilst here, Luong?"

"At the Seredan's own house all the time," replied he. "Ay, and now I remember he came in the boat of one of the priests."

Momien's links were nearly complete now. He had no doubt but the high priest knew where Aungua was, but he dared not express or even hint this belief to Luong, who was a staunch idolater, and revered his high priest. He must try some other suggestion, and he said, "Luong, this Maywoon seems to have something to do with our boy's detention, what think you?"

Meditating with a serious air, the warrior kept

silent for a brief space, and then answered, "Without doubt he has all to do with it, Momien ; but he has used others to carry out his purpose, I think also beyond doubt : who he has used is the problem. Could I but have time and liberty I would quickly find the boy out, but I dare not leave."

"I know it," said Momien, "it is an evil thing, and a great yoke to labour under."

"Yoke indeed it is," said Luong : "if I should dare leave the troop now and desert my post, all my family would be put to death by the Boa."

"You cannot act, I well know, good Luong ; but tell me what course you think I had better pursue."

Before the warrior could reply, a shrill blast of a rude conch-like trumpet burst on their ears, rousing the slowest to action. "I must go, Momien, I dare not stop. Use your own skill and judgment ; I dare not stop, farewell !" and with this hasty adieu Luong had gone before even Momien could utter a word. He left the old Christian as puzzled how to act as before, but more awakened to the danger he was in, and to the powerful foe he had to contend with—the Viceroy of Prome. The Seredan, too, he felt convinced was a secret worker, and *his* power Momien felt was even terrible. Still these links gave no clue to Aun-

gua's place of detainment, and that was the point to ascertain. Momien turned these things over and over in his mind, and determined to protect his charge, Domea, and remove her from this dangerous spot to one where they would be unknown and safe, and there wait the course of events, trusting in God that this mystery would soon be unravelled.

By the time Momien had launched his canoe again, the day was far spent and evening coming on. The ebb tide was setting strong down the river, and although he kept near the river's bank, the old Christian found it hard work to stem the tide. He plied his paddle with vigour, first on one side and then on the other, but his light bark sometimes seemed to be at a stand still, and then again it would glide very slowly ahead. Many canoes were coming rapidly down the stream, but none going up except Momien's. Anxious to reach home, he plied his paddle until his arms ached. After a toilsome paddling, at last he came in sight of Kemmendine, but the sun had gone down, and the short twilight ushered in the night. Not a cloud was on the vault of heaven. One by one the bright stars came peeping out, and the sweet crescent moon, half way towards the quarter, threaded the twinkling maze of orbs, gently



asserting her right of queen. The night deepened over the earth, but brighter still the stars looked down from their blue arched dome, the constellations gemming the sky with great beauty. Slowly the mighty vault seemed revolving majestically, the bright orbs rose from the east, ascended the deep blue hill, passed the meridian, and as grandly sank in the west. Silently this sublime panorama swept on, and Momien, in spite of his fatigue, cast many a glance above. He could read their sweet configurations with the eye of learning, but to him they were even more wonderful than to the untutored mind. Might, majesty, and wisdom he clearly read in that starry volume ; but he—

“ Could also trace,  
And read amidst their characters of gold,  
The tales of love ; God’s love, His sweetest grace.”

These musings were abruptly checked by his canoe grounding on the beach. He jumped thankfully ashore, and having moored his frail bark, he turned to hasten home with all speed, when he espied a boy, even one of the little ones who came daily to his house. Running up, the boy said he had been waiting his return, as a man in the village, at the point of death, expressed great desire to see the Christian. Could

Momien let slip this opportunity to communicate good? No ; anxious as he was to be at home, he hesitated not to follow the lad towards the village.

The day had been a weary one for Domea. Her maid having told and re-told her story of what she had heard, was allowed to go free at length, and busied herself about the house. Domea tried to weave at her loom, but her hands plied not, whilst her tears slowly fell. She tried to soothe her heart with a plaintive melody on her patola, but the first faint notes, struck with a trembling hand, died away as her head fell on her hand, and her sobs alone were heard. Again she walked into the garden, but there a flood of once happy memories overpowered her poor heart, and she left the spot. Then she looked long and lingeringly at Aungua's sword ; a precious but a sad treasure to her, until bowed down with grief, she knelt in prayer and poured out her burdened heart to Him who heareth. Here she found consolation which nought else could give, and rising from her knees with a heart more hopeful and full of faith, she returned to her loom. The day passed, and evening gathered over the land. No Momien yet ; what could have detained him ? Her maid suggested the strong

ebb tide as the reason, and this somewhat soothed her alarm. Darkness gathered, and the oil lamp shed its light over the room, whilst the lamp of night oured down her silver radiance over the scene; her faint rays reflecting from the river, and glancing up the many glittering spires, until they reached the golden pagoda of Shoodagon, up which they danced merrily, and seemed to leap from its spire up to the moon once more.

Eagerly both Domea and her maid listened for Momien's footfall. Oftentimes they fancied he was coming, but were deceived. At length their eager ears caught the sound of footfalls coming near. They approached the door; seizing the lamp, Domea sprang up—a knock! ah, 'tis he at last! Unbarring the door, she threw it open, but started back in horror as the rays of her lamp fell on the form of a powerful, well-armed man. One cry, and before it could be repeated, she was seized by the giant arms, whilst armed men from front and back filled the house, preventing all escape. Without a word, a silk cloth was bound over her mouth, and one round her maid's also; then wrapping both Domea and Loo in large mantles, the chief lifted her in his arms, heedless of [her struggles; another lifted Loo, and

in a few seconds the house was cleared, they leaving the old Burmese servant bound on the floor.

The crescent moon was nearer the horizon, and fresh constellations were peeping above the east, when other footfalls approached. This time it was Momien, and he came almost breathless with haste. He had been decoyed away. The lad led him through the streets to a tottering hovel, wherein was the man feigning sickness. With deep cunning he detained the old Christian, who for a long time perceived not the pretence of his sickness, but at length he did, and left in disgust. Reaching his home, all was darkness, and the door slightly open. Amazed, he entered in the dark, and shouted for the servant. A voice at hand answered, and begged piteously to be unbound. Groping in the dark, Momien soon struck a light, and all was revealed. Unbinding his man, he heard of the sudden attack, and learnt with consternation of Domea's abduction. "Who were they? Who were they? Speak! Speak!" he cried, with deep emotion and quivering voice.

"They were dressed like the warriors of Arracan," said the Burman. Momien stared wildly as he heard this, and then, as if struck down by an avalanche, without a cry, the old man fell heavily to the ground.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE PRISONER OF SHOODAGON.

FOR several moments Aungua remained as if spell-bound, gazing at the closed door, after he had been left in his dungeon. Without moving hand or foot, gradually his eyes became accustomed to the faint light of the lamp, and he began to look around him. He was in a rudely excavated cave, with a high roof. The floor was paved with stone flags, and the sides supported in parts by timbers. Taking up the lamp he examined his prison with care. It was large ; some twenty feet from the door to the back wall, but the sides were uneven. The cell contained only a rude naked bench for the prisoner to sleep on, with an earthen vessel containing water. In the left side of his cell Aungua noticed a small opening and the passage through which he passed, and entered another cell similar to his own, guarded also by a massive door. He examined this door, and found it well secured from without. Returning to his own

cave, and placing the lamp in its place, once more Aungua seated himself on his bench, and remained more than an hour in deep thought. His heart was full of anxiety and care about Domea. He imagined what would be her heart-broken state at his long absence, but was of course utterly ignorant of what had transpired since his capture. Again and again he went over the events of the past few days, and felt convinced his detention was in some way connected with the priests. Past events rendered this beyond doubt, and from the priests he naturally thought of Domea's father. Could he have instigated this? He was capable, Aungua well knew, but charity made him reluctant to ascribe this act to his Domea's parent, or to the priests directly; but did he not know their morality was, for the most part, a mockery? Perhaps, after all, the powerful rival might be the secret cause of all this. His great power Aungua well knew, and when aroused, many means might be adopted by him for revenge. He might have employed the priests. How often those meek hypocrites had meddled in dangerous intrigues; and how many had lost their lives through leaving Buddhism, and thereby rousing the hatred of the priests! To leave Buddhism was to be a traitor, if the Boa chose to consider it so—and

who so influential as the priests. Powerful enemies Aungua well knew he had—open ones he cared not for. Even if the emperor was instigated to punish him for leaving his religion, which he did not believe, (well knowing his importance in the army) ; still, if such were the case, he could escape his wrath. Once away, he could join Berhing, and then be free. But would such secret means be employed ? Would the strange sailors be used to entrap him ? Would the Boa call in the aid of the priests ? No ; there could be no likelihood of this. Filled with such varied thoughts, Aungua raised his head from his hands and gazed around his cell. He had almost forgotten his helpless condition, but now it returned with bitter reality. Whoever was the cause, he felt himself in their power : and by what means ?

Ah, his impetuous nature, subdued, but not swept away by Christianity, was rising in indignation, as he remembered how the captain had deceived him ; first so open and friendly to keep him on board, and then so treacherous ; taking advantage of his confidence in his avowed goodwill to betray him bound to those who brought him ashore. Had he but an inkling of this before, he would have struggled desperately, no matter their numbers or their force, rather than be thus

vilely entrapped. He reproached himself for being so confiding. How often it is that an open and a charitable disposition meets with deception, which makes it for a time waver between two opinions, shall I trust or shall I doubt? Worldly wisdom would without doubt say, "disbelieve;" but Christianity, putting fresh life into the words of a worldly song, would say—

" 'Tis better far to trust and be deceived,  
Than own the mean cold spirit that betrays."

Aungua's self-reproaches soon faded away in the conviction that he had acted charitably, but he now saw there were two sides even to this question, and if we are to be as confiding and harmless as doves, we must also be wise as serpents.

'But what use are these thoughts to him now? He is betrayed and helpless, a prisoner in a firmly fastened dungeon. Who may have been the contrivers of this capture he knows not; now is the time to plan some means of escape. Rashness will not do here. Patience and well directed courage must extricate him. Revolving these things in his mind, Aungua determined to let the matter rest until the morrow. Perhaps he may glean much from his gaoler if there be any. Wearied in body and in heart,



Aungua made up his mind to refresh both with sleep. Taking a long draught of water, laying aside his turban, and kneeling long in prayer, he stretched himself on the rude hard bench and soon fell asleep, in spite of the buzzing and stinging insects that swarmed the damp air of the dungeon. He slept soundly for some hours, undisturbed by the many lizards that darted over his body, or by their frequent chucks. At last he awoke and started to his feet. Still all was night, relieved by the still burning lamp. No ray of daylight was to be seen ; he wondered at this, and thought he must have slept very little. Ah ! no light of the sun ever penetrated that prison !

Being stiff about the limbs, he paced up and down his close cell, feeling sick with the dense atmosphere and the fumes of the lamp. Again he examined the place and the adjoining cell, but found no means of egress except through the stout doors, and no weapon or tool of any kind. It was a cheerless sound to hear the dull patting of his naked feet on the stone flags. His thoughts were now wholly bent on effecting his escape to regain Domea. To do this, he saw it would be wiser to remain quiet until he had ascertained, from his gaoler, where he was, and such other information as would guide him in his plans. He had

not walked long to and fro his rude cell before he heard something approaching the door, which soon opened heavily, and Aungua, standing with his arms folded, saw a short, fat priest enter, bearing a fresh lamp and a platter of rice. The priest entered cautiously, closing the door and keeping his face towards his prisoner. A smile was playing over the priest's broad face, and he gave Aungua a cordial greeting, replacing the old lamp with the fresh one, and depositing the rice on the floor. Aungua quietly watched these movements, but moved not an inch from the spot where he stood; but when he saw the priest ready to depart his plan was formed, and he spoke for the first time—

“Will you tell me the hour of the night?” said he.

“Hour of the night!” exclaimed the priest; “it is day, not night, and the hour is eight past midnight!”

“*This* day?” said Aungua, greatly surprised, and gazing around him, but in vain, to catch a ray of sunlight; “then how long have I been here?”

“Some hours,” replied Guhlinugah, for he it was; Koonah by this time being on his way to Danoobyoo to fetch Munris down to the high priest. Guhlinugah was a simple-minded man; delighting to obey his

superior, whom he dreaded and revered because of his great dignity. He lacked Koonah's deep cunning, and being kept much in the dark by his companion, he felt a great desire to know more of his prisoner and his capture at first. Living luxuriously on the good things provided daily by the people's hospitality, and grown corpulent thereon, Guhlinugah busied himself little about the other matters of the world, and kept the little secret he knew of his superior's doings with a jealous zeal. Aungua saw at a glance how easily he might deal with this priest, and observing also that he lingered as if on purpose for conversation, he said, "Will you tell me what part of Rangoon these vaults are in? Surely none but Shoodagon is wealthy enough to have such!"

"You are right," replied the priest; "Shoodagon alone is rich enough, and these are Shoodagon's vaults; and secure ones they are too," said he, anxious to impress his prisoner with an idea that escape was difficult.

"I knew not before now that such vaults existed here. But, good priest, tell me how long I am to be detained? Am I here by the orders of your Seredan?"

"It is our holy Seredan's will that you be kept

here ; but, good youth, it is for your good, and harm is not intended. How long you remain here depends upon yourself."

"What mean you?" asked Aungua, in surprise. "If it depended upon myself, I should depart this moment."

"What I mean you will soon know," returned the priest, cunningly.

"You say also," continued Aungua, scarcely noticing this remark ; "you say also that you intend me no harm, but does this abode look like hospitality and good intentions? Contrasted with your fair words, it is like——" He was going to say like their principles and practice, but policy checked his harsh remark ; and he stopped short, and changed the subject, by saying, "Will you tell me if the army has marched yet?"

"Some parts of it have," replied Guhlinugah ; "and in a few days our grand feast days will be onward."

"Indeed ! shall I hear aught of the rejoicings?" asked Aungua.

"Hear it? Oh, no ! not down here. If I were to leave the door at the head of the steps open, then you might hear the noise in the temple hall above ; but not now, closed as it is."

"Tell me one thing more, good priest," said Aungua. "Do you know if the troop of Kemmen-dine has marched?"

Thinking a moment, the priest replied, "Yes, they have. But I must away. We expect a noted visitor soon."

"Stay, stay, one word more!" urged Aungua, as the priest was moving towards the door. "Tell the Seredan I must see him. Ask him to visit me soon—will you?"

"I will," was the response; and before Aungua could speak again the door closed, and he heard the ponderous bolts shot heavily into their sockets. At once he saw himself shut out again from liberty, and felt he had lost an opportunity. Why had he not overpowered the priest? The stairs he had just heard led to the temple above; but there might he not have been again taken? The opportunity may come again; and Aungua determined to venture all, and make an effort to escape.

Long he waited, but the opportunity came not. He ate the food provided, drank of the water, and as the time wore slowly on he sought repose again. After a short sleep, a sound in the next cell made him start to his feet. Seizing the lamp, he entered,

and near the door he saw fresh food, and a lamp, and water. He saw at once the cunning plan : whilst he was in one cell, the provision would be quickly placed in the other ; thus giving him no opportunity of carrying his project into effect.

This idea proved correct, and three days passed without a single being appearing to poor Aungua, whose spirits began to be much depressed ; but his courage became greater, and he determined to devise some project to allure his gaoler in. Time he reckoned by his meals. Twice a day, once at morning and once at evening, it was the general custom to eat ; and reckoning two meals a day, Aungua calculated that he had passed now four nights in his cell, including the night of his entrance. To describe his wretchedness and thoughts during this lonely time is too difficult to attempt. At times, at most times, and getting more frequent as his confinement lasted, he felt almost mad. Domea was his only theme, but Momien was not forgotten. Still he wisely ate all the food his gaoler brought, as he knew how much depended on his bodily strength.

Wearily the time wore on, and Aungua, who had not undressed since his confinement, was by this time most uncomfortable in body as well as in mind. The

hard bench he heeded not, but the slimy lizards, the damp walls of his cell, the crowds of stinging insects, and the dense atmosphere, but slightly relieved by small holes in the massive doors—these things were scarcely endurable. Had he but a tool he would have raised a flag and undermined the door, but he had none. As the times came round for his lamp to be changed and his food brought, he would creep silently from cell to cell, in hopes of catching the door open, but in vain : still he persevered.

The time again came round. It was the morning of the fourth day, and he was expecting his seventh meal, and as usual Aungua was crouching with his ear close to the door in the adjoining cell. He had not listened long, when he heard faint voices of some coming. Two priests (Koonah and Guhlinugah) were approaching his very door, but he knew not the shape or arrangements of the exterior of his cell. Little thinking of who was on the inner side, the priests stopped at the huge cell door, and remained talking. For some moments, Aungua could hear only mutterings ; but getting more accustomed, he soon made out their words. One was speaking in a decided tone, and he caught the words, " We shall lead a different life then, brother. This is dull, but

there, Guhlinugah, you shall feast on fat things every day." A voice answered, but more waveringly, "But, good Koonah, where now is the wealth you speak of?" The other answered, "Ah, brother, that is safe; that is safe, in good keeping; and when I like to claim it, I can have it." "And when shall we go?" asked the one whom Aungua understood to be called Guhlinugah. "Go," replied Koonah, "as soon as the feast days are over." "But what shall we do when the money is all expended?" asked the careful priest. "Oh, do not be alarmed about that, brother; there is enough to last long, long years, but when it is done, then we will come back to our Seredan, and say we have only travelled, and then ——"

"But, Koonah," interrupted the other, "our commands say we must not lie, and not steal."

"Fool!" muttered the other, angrily, "does the Seredan obey Guadama, when he keeps this young warrior confined. 'Thou shalt not kill,' saith the Damarthal; but I well know this warrior's doom. Guhlinugah, for what are passions and appetites given to us, but to have delight? and how can they be satisfied except by money? and how shall we have money except we stretch forth our hand and take it?" This sweeping mode of reasoning



seemed to silence the conscience of Guhlinugah, who, after a brief silence, said, "What were you going to say, Koonah, when I checked your words?" "I was going to say," replied he addressed, "that when we return to Shoodagon we need not lack money, whilst the treasures of Shoodagon are at hand." An exclamation of surprise greeted this bold speech, but Koonah continued: "Fool again, whose wealth is this but Guadama's, and are we not Guadama's priests? Can he use it? Is it not for us? How then dost thou exclaim at this?"

A few more remarks passed to which Aungua listened most eagerly, when he heard the one with the fainter voice say, as if to himself, "Koonah is right: this wealth is ours. Oh, what glorious prospects open before me now! Surely he is favoured of Guadama to know these things. All the fruits and good things of the earth will be mine. My time shall be spent like the bees, sipping honey from every flower of delight I pass."

A loud crash startled Aungua, and leaving the soliloquising priest, he rushed into his own cell, expecting, but dreading the consequences of his lingering. Again he was foiled: the food, the lamp, the water was there afresh, but the door closed. Dropping

the lamp poor Aungua clasped his hands to his head and groaned with bitter anguish. He fell on his knees and prayed aloud; and He who has often heard cries for help from the dungeons' depths, and *always* aided, now heard the young Christian's prayer, and sent, not present deliverance, but what is oftentimes better—comfort, and a strong spirit to endure with patience. Rising with a stouter heart, Aungua looked around for some means of defence; for the words of Koonah, darkly intimating his fate, had entered his soul. What could he have! His roaming eyes rested on the empty metal lamps, and the wooden platters, and the heavy water jugs now empty. All these had not been removed, and Aungua now gathered them in a heap near his rude bed, determined to defend himself to the last.

The time now passed even more anxiously than before, and his sleep was fitful and disturbed. Oftentimes would he start to his feet, grasping a heavy water jug, and stare around his cell.

Aungua's lion heart, and once dauntless spirit, was succumbing under this continued solitary imprisonment; but he hoped on, and his native courage struggled nobly against the nervousness which he felt creeping gradually over him.

On the very day that he overheard the priests Aungua was pacing his lonely cell, when he heard steps approaching. His door opened, and to his surprise the high priest suddenly entered, closing the heavy door behind him. Aungua looked steadily at him, whose face was all meekness. He in turn gazed on his Christian prisoner, whose eye flashed boldness and defiance. Aungua's Christianity struggled hard to keep down his native anger : it conquered, and he asked with calm, but firm tones, " Will the high priest of Burmah tell me why I am thus a prisoner, and in the vaults of Shoodagon ?" Aungua moved not as he spoke, and the priest, leaning against the door, replied with his smooth voice, " Aungua, I doubt not but this appears strange in your sight, but you are here for your own good. I have left you so long alone, that the sanctity of our holy temple might remind you of early days."

" It does remind me of such," replied Aungua ; " but with the memory it brings regret, that I had been so long worshipping a god moulded by human hands. Had I not been trained under the dark guidance of your priesthood, I might have thought a man should worship some being better than himself. I regret those days, but thank the great and the holy God I now know better."

“ Ah, poor boy, I have grieved over your loss as a father grieveth over a lost child : you have left our honoured religion, with all its privileges, and what have you gained ? ”

“ Ah, great Seredan, would to God *you* knew what I have gained ! What has *your* religion to offer ? A life of misery—deprivation of all the sweets of social life and the happiness of relations ; to be immured in monasteries ; to pass lives of ridiculous formalities ; professing good things with your tongue, but giving them the lie in practice ; and what hereafter ? Ah, poor recompence for all your toil ; to be sentenced again to live on earth in some other form, perhaps as a crawling lizard, or trailing plant, and this for ages and ages. And should you perchance attain to your heaven, what is that ? Annihilation ! Utter destruction ! Your senses scattered to the four winds, until you become nothing ! Such are your gains, and such, you say, are my losses. Priest of Burmah, I will tell you what I have found in my new religion : I see this earth a scene of trial, rich in blessings, but polluted and ruined with sin ; I see myself standing alone at the head of creation, with an immortal soul, a spark from God, but lost in sin ; doomed to

utter misery. I see again, oh glorious sight ! my God himself, full of love and mercy, coming to this earth, and in the form of man obeying those laws I have broken ; receiving the punishment I merited, and now offering me and you and all men salvation through his merits. I see by faith a blessed comforting and guiding Spirit teaching me truth, warning me from error, and leading me in paths of peace. In this world my duty is to exert myself in the business of life, to earn my bread ; but not to have its pleasures or its riches enshrined, as idols, in my heart. Using the good things of this world, but not abusing them. Living in brotherly love with all ; showing them the blessings I have found. Doing my Master's will—not my own. These are my pleasures in life ; and after death my religion gives me, not destruction but life, and joy, and purity, with my Saviour, in His blessed home of bliss for ever and for ever."

Aungua ceased, and for some time Symoo Seredan replied not. His face was clouded, but at last he exclaimed, with a smile of contempt, " Poor, misguided boy, what my persuasions cannot do, perhaps time will effect. I seek only to do you good."

" Why not then release me, Seredan. I want not your religion, nor your fatherly care."

"Foolish boy," replied the Seredan, "you are branded as a *traitor*; ay, as a traitor," he continued, as he saw Aungua start, "and to release you now would be to hurl you to destruction."

"A traitor! say you, Seredan?" said Aungua; "even that I care not for. False priest, you have lied. You seek not my good, but to take my life, like a vile coward in the night. You start and tremble, but your own tool keeps not your secrets."

It was now Symoo's turn to start, but with a desperate effort he recovered himself enough to say, "What mean you, Aungua? Tell me what said the priest."

"I will tell you, Seredan," said Aungua, boldly, but with calmness; "but this morning, although I see no morning here, I heard two of your priests conversing at the door of this inner cell. Their names I heard were Koonah and Guhlinugah. I heard that Koonah had participated in some robbery, and was planning with his companion to leave Rangoon, and dwell in some other town, there to enjoy their ill-gotten gains. Guhlinugah, I understood, objected on account of the sin of this; and in removing his scruples, Koonah said that you, great Seredan, although a high priest of Burmah, intended consigning me to some horrible doom. Let me tell you all,"

continued Aungua, as he saw the high priest eager to speak : " I heard also their planning to rob even your pagoda of some of its wealth. Think you that I speak hastily now ?"

He ceased speaking, and fixed his searching eyes on the priest, but he met Aungua's glance firmly. Amazed as he was at this revelation, he mastered all outward emotion, and calmly replied, " Do you then believe this vile report ?"

" Must I not believe a priest of Burmah ?" asked Aungua.

Deigning no reply to this cutting blow, the priest said, " To prove to you, Aungua, that I seek not your harm, promise me but one thing, and I will release you even now."

Bright as the prospect seemed, Aungua doubted, and said, " What must I promise ?"

" Promise this," replied Symoo, " that you will never breathe to any living person, or tell by any means of your confinement here ; or of the part which I and my priests have taken in your capture. Promise this on your word as a warrior of Burmah, and you are free."

Without hesitation his prisoner replied, " I cannot promise, and that you well know ; nor do I need

your consent, proud priest." Quick as thought Aungua sprang at the Seredan, but was met by a glittering dagger. He recoiled from this sudden danger, and stooping, seized one of his metal lamps, but his uplifted arm was arrested by the Seredan's voice before he could hurl the missile : " Foolish boy ! are you mad ? Such attacks but increase your danger. I have offered you liberty, you have refused. Think of it again ; I give you another chance ; but listen to this, brave warrior ; Monchaboo is dead ! you are branded as his assassin, and your gentle Domea has disappeared ! "

Like bolt after bolt from the thunder cloud upon a frail building, so fell these cruel words on Aungua's ears ; they pierced like swords to his heart. The missile dropped with a loud ring upon the stone floor, and he sank upon the bench, bowing his head upon his knees.

When poor Aungua raised his head, the Seredan was gone, and the massive door was secured as firmly as before.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE DISGRACED PRIEST.

HASTENING up the massive stone steps of the vault, the high priest passed through the temple hall, not even deigning a glance at his favourite idol, now fresh gilded, and covered with gay silk banners and scarfs for the coming festival. The priests bowed humbly as their superior passed them with a hurried step, but not a trace of the inward storm could be read in his countenance. Through the hall, and down the covered way into his own gardens, the Seredan went, and threw himself on the grassy knoll, under the tamarind tree which so lately shadowed the mountain chief of Arracan and the viceroy of Burmah.

The sun was far down in the west, and the garden all in shade, but it was rich light compared with the gloom and dark thoughts of its owner. Often reclining on that pleasant bank, meditating of the future glories of annihilation, the Seredan now meditated on the startling words which had fallen from

his prisoner's lips. His tool and part confidant, Koonah, a traitor! and even a robber! Breaking the direct commands of his religion, he had stolen. Worse still, he had misled a brother priest, and even meditated robbing the sacred pagoda of Shoodagon itself! The enormity of these offences at first quite astounded the high priest. He little thought how he himself was breaking the commands of his religion, but he saw clearly the offences of his inferiors. And such offences cannot be forgiven. Guadama insulted! No, this cannot be forgiven; Koonah must be thrust forth from the holy brethren lest he contaminate others. But his knowledge—will it not be dangerous? With a strong and bold hand the Seredan can defy this. Who in all Burmah would dare a thought of ill against Guadama's high priest? Who listen to the revengeful ravings of a disgraced phongis? Besides, can he not be the cause of for ever silencing the traitor's tales if need be? And what of Guhlinugah, shall he also be disgraced? No; this need not be. He is a simple-minded, misled man; reverencing his superior, and knowing little of his ways. A word from him will unveil his companion's villany, and he will be humbled at his own proposed participation.

With such thoughts as these, the Seredan became more composed in mind. The priest must be branded and disgraced ; to-morrow is the festival, and when these days of gaiety have passed, then will be time to visit again his prisoner.

Rising from the knoll, he entered his dwelling, and bidding a young priest to summon Guhlinugah, he passed into a spacious room, the roof of which was supported by carved and gilded pillars, whilst gilded representations of animals and grotesque figures covered the walls and ceiling. Seating himself on a mat, the Seredan had not waited long when the priest entered ; the one we have seen in Aungua's cell—short and fat. His broad face now wore an air of solemnity and of awe, whilst his eyes looked meekly on the ground. Kneeling before his superior, Guhlinugah raised his hands to his face in homage.

“Guhlinugah,” said the Seredan in gentle tones, and with a searching glance, “Guhlinugah, when next thou enterest into unholy plans, see that Guadama is not near. Did I teach thee, my son, to covet and steal worldly goods, or to contemplate stealing the riches of our hallowed pagoda ?”

Like a thunder-clap, like a death-knell, sounded these words in poor Guhlinugah's ears. The con-

ference down in the bowels of the earth known to his superior ! He was lost ! lost and undone ! Not a word could he utter ; and the high priest, watching his confusion, at length spoke again. " Fear not, my son ; thou hast sinned, but I condemn thee not. He who misled thee shall be punished ; tell me plainly of this sinful act and wicked purpose : I have forgiven thee, Guhlinugah."

Cheered with this forgiving speech, and humbled and crushed at his own wickedness being discovered, he replied with a low and trembling voice, but daring not to meet the keen eye of his superior—

" Oh, holy father, I am humbled in the dust. In an evil moment, I was tempted from my duty ; but, father, I had not shared in Koonah's guilt. He has shared in some robbery at Kemmendine, and the wealth is now on board the strange ship in the river ; but, holy father, I know no more of it than this."

" And how camest thou to yield, Guhlinugah ?" asked the Seredan, quietly, but with an anxious spirit, and more amazed at this fresh intelligence.

" Holy father," replied the Rhahaan, gaining more confidence, and now only eager to clear himself by convicting his companion. " Holy father, in an unwary moment, he told me that the commands of

our Damarthal were not to be strictly obeyed, and—and because—" the priest hesitated. He had approached a dangerous revelation, but the Seredan was too keen for him. "Because what, my son?" asked he. "Tell me, without hesitation."

"Because, father, all priests do not obey it?"

"Guhlinugah," said the Seredan in a stern voice, "thou shalt tell me all! He said more. What priest did the wicked Koonah speak of?"

"Oh, most holy father, woe is me that I listened to such evil counsel. Woe is me that I should have heard our holy father reviled," groaned forth the priest, as he rocked himself to and fro in sheer grief at his sin.

The Seredan, who with difficulty restrained his countenance from showing signs of anger, spoke rapidly. "Guhlinugah, I will speak to thee more of this at a future time. Tell me now of those evil plans against our sacred pagoda."

"Holy father, Koonah said that Guadama's wealth was for his children's use, and whilst so much riches were in the vaults we need not fear; but, good lord, in truth, no plans were formed."

"That will do, my son; now listen to me, and take heed thou obeyest my orders. Enter not into conversation with the evil Koonah; make no replies to

his questions. Explain not thyself to any of thy brethren beyond this : 'It is our Seredan's command that Koonah be confined.' To-morrow he shall be disgraced. Look thou to the prisoner alone ; thy sin needs purging, and thou must be diligent ; mine eye will be over thee ; thou hast been misled, and I forgive thee ; Koonah has wilfully sinned, and he shall be punished. Go, my son, and may the blessings of Neilan be thine."

Rejoiced at his escape, the priest glided off with firm resolves to earn his superior's confidence again, and determined to shun Koonah. The high priest remained, pacing his splendid apartment, deep in thought. To do him justice, his wrath at Koonah's guilt was purely from religious zeal. Personal wrongs he felt not, but his god had been insulted in himself, and even sacrilege premeditated. What a shining light that man would have become on the Christian race-course ! With his zealous heart, quick, clever mind, far, far above his fellows, he might have been an apostle of the truth. But, oh, how deluded and darkened is that noble mind ! How he reverences his mute god ! Ever planning how to increase its glory, and to *bend* hearts down to its worship.

The evening came ; night deepened, and morning

dawned. The east was scarcely illumined with the rays of the coming orb when Rangoon was all bustle and activity, but not with business : that was cast aside. The holiday garb of gay turbans, silk putsos and tameings was donned, and merry smiles lit up the faces of all as they turned out into the crowding streets at that early hour. A few days of enjoyment and mock worship made them elated. When the sun arose, its beams poured down on a lively scene. Pilgrims from other towns in rich coloured dresses, principally of silk, were there in vast numbers. Thousands on foot, with large umbrellas, smoking with vigour ; females carrying their infants on their hips. Horsemen, too, gaily dressed, on their little prancing steeds, covered with saddle-cloths of tiger skins ; music on all sides. The river, also, was crowded with skimming canoes, and on the banks were booths erected for the spectators to witness the races.

We soon see the crowds pressing eagerly up the hill towards Shoodagon, for the gaities must be commenced with worship. The steps are thronged with eager worshippers chatting merrily, but as we approach the temple and emerge on the open court, the conversation becomes subdued, but still the cigars are in their mouths. Priests in their yellow robes now

give a bright tone to this gay picture. The temples around are crowded with worshippers, and little groups, squatting and kneeling, listen reverently to the exhortations of various priests. Entering the grand hall, what a busy scene is here! The huge idol squatting on its raised throne, glittering with gold and decked with rich banners and scarfs, looks vacantly down upon the devotees who are engaged in—what? actual worship! What a strange worship! Some are offering flowers and fruits on the altar before the idol. Some are zealously plastering fresh pieces of gold leaf over the image, and some throwing crackers most unceremoniously in his face. Others again, are kneeling and squatting with hands clasped, holding flowers in an act of supplication, and behind all are groups sitting in the hall, smoking and gossiping in an undertone. Continually are heard the tones of large bells outside the temple, struck by the worshippers to call Guadama's attention to the fact of their attendance at his shrine. The priests intermingle in the groups.

Suddenly a noise is heard. The worshippers pause in their devotions and turn their eyes towards the entrance, through which the Seredan advances with a stately step. All heads bow, all knees are bent, and all voices hushed as he walks to the altar. The priests



crowd in, and a service, or public worship commences. The high priest conducts it, and the people respond audibly; the prayer is followed by an exhortation, which done the Seredan retires as before, and the people continue their ludicrous adoration, alternately smoking, chatting, praying, and listening to the various priests, and little dreaming of the poor prisoner in his gloomy cell beneath their feet.

In the town gay scenes are going forward and mimic shows. We pass a merry procession of an allegorical kind. Two men dressed and painted like striped tigers, doubtless representing demons, are led by chains round their waist by others of sober countenance. The demons yell and plunge, but cannot escape, whilst behind is a man dressed as a sultan, with meek face and downcast eyes riding on a palfrey. Passing this crowd, we next meet a vast concourse of people, and recognise some of the *Saucy Jane's* crew. Here a gigantic tower, or miniature pagoda, gaily decorated with bright streamers and profusely covered with gilding, is borne on the shoulders of many natives, while bands of music fill the air with a constant din.

Shouts and laughter, songs and music resound, and thousands of gaily dressed people throng the streets. Near the river side, on an open space, we come across

another extensive crowd, and pressing through we see in a ring, made chiefly of females, two muscular men naked, and in the act of wrestling. Their deeds of prowess draw forth loud cries of approbation. But greater masses still crowd the river banks and fill the sheds erected there for the occasion. Hundreds of canoes glide on the Irrawaddy. All seem anxiously expecting something. What is it? A few moments' suspense, and a deafening shout from the gazers gives notice of some exciting event. Two long painted canoes dart from the mass of vessels, and away on their race. All is excitement now. Bets are made, the females more speculating than the men. The rowers paddle manfully, reach the turning point, and swing round, almost filling their canoes with water in the sudden check; back again they dash, shouting and singing, and deriding their opposers until the goal is reached and the race is won.

Turning from these exciting scenes, we again thread our way through the streets, and suddenly come upon a group of the brigantine's crew. We recognise Jack, Carlo the carpenter, and a few more light-hearted rovers enjoying the fun.

"Come along, lads," cried Jack; "here's a mob going somewhere. Let's off and see the sport."

Away they follow the mob, and loud laughter and shouts reach their ears. "What's up, Jack?" asked Carlo, as he saw the tar had mounted the steps of a dwelling, and was peering over the mob towards the spot.

"What's up, lad? why, my stars, but there's something up. They've got some nigger on a critter, and are a pelting him wi' something. Heave ahead, lads, and let's see the fun," said he, gaily, as he sprang down, and the little band elbowed their way through the crowd.

"Hillo, Jack," cried the carpenter; "why, that's our old chum the pongee, or I'm a priest."

"So it is, lad; but what's he doing there? Raither out of sorts, I reckon."

"Stand clear, boys! here they come," shouted Carlo; and as the men stepped back the crowd surged on like a huge wave, and opening just at that spot revealed a strange sight. A man, naked to his waist, and with his hands bound was riding an ass, but his face towards the animal's tail, and his feet tied under its belly. The man was daubed with large spots of white and black paint, and the delighted mob urging on the animal, at all times slow, pelted the wretched rider with mud and every missile their hands could grasp.

No pity there. Who is he? What is his offence? Yells and shouts greet the poor wretch, thundering in his ears, "Away with the traitor! Koonah, the vile priest! the thief, and the liar! Away, away with the traitor!" And every cry is followed by showers of imprecations and mud, and the beating of drums. The wretched priest hangs his head, but from his eyes revenge and fury send fierce glances, and he grinds his teeth with rage.

The crowd swept on to the outskirts of the town, leaving the smugglers quite puzzled at this strange scene, but powerless to help him.

The disgrace of Koonah attracted thousands of spectators, and he was hurried on to the stockade amidst continuous shouts and yells. Reaching the eastern gate, he was untied and dismounted with rough hands, and thrust forth from the city under a parting volley of curses and missiles. Bruised and sore with this rough treatment, the priest summoned up all his strength, and fled rapidly towards the neighbouring forest, heedless of danger, careless of his end.

Soon getting within its friendly shadow, he seated himself on a fallen tree, and brooded long over his disgrace. Again and again he fancied he could hear

the yells of the mob, and his limbs ached with their heavy blows, whilst the blood trickled from more wounds than one. Every little circumstance he went over and over again in his mind. The Seredan's unflinching orders ; his keen, unwavering glance. In vain had been his railing accusations ; none had believed them, and he was now cast forth from society, branded, and a felon.

These reverses galled that daring, cunning spirit, but instead of bowing him in repentance, they filled him with deep determination of revenge. For a long, long time he brooded thus, and then rising with pain from his seat, he turned towards the city, and with gleaming eyes, extended his clenched hand towards it, exclaiming, " Proud Seredan of Burmah ! thou father of hypocrisy ! thou didst teach me to sin and dissemble for your purposes, and when I would have profited by thy teaching, thou hast spurned me ! abhorred me ! ruined, and cast me forth ! Ah ! thou hast trodden on the head of a snake, but it shall send venom yet into thy very life-blood ! "

With these words the priest crept along the edge of the jungle, until he reached a part watered by the river. Here he seated himself, hidden from all human view, but himself seeing clearly the

broad river, with the many canoes thereon, and the black form of the brigantine. For hours he sat thus, forming plans of vengeance. All his former desires for wealth had vanished like vapour, but he had now set up a new idol in his heart. Revenge he would henceforth live for—would dream of—would worship.

Often did a canoe pass down or up the river, but the rowers little thought, as they casually glanced towards the thick jungle, who was sitting within its shadow. Koonah's eyes were fixed on the brigantine ; therein lay his little wealth, and there now were his hopes fixed. He waited for the night to cover his proceedings ; but he waited long.

At length, evening cast its shadows over the river, and the jungle became gloomy ; and as he glanced up the river, he saw one by one lights springing up along the shore. Lights on the river, too, were increasing rapidly. He knew their meaning, and listened, as he caught the sounds of music borne down the river. Even from that distance, he heard the busy hum in the town of festivities.

The scene grew darker, but the crescent moon was peeping down, and in the distance the river was one brilliant gleam of light, and appeared to get brighter and closer. And so indeed it was ; the lamps were

floating! A fleet of thousands of tiny rafts bearing burning lamps was now sweeping down the stream, and as they neared the watching priest, and passed him one by one, he heard the music sounding louder, and saw, in the centre of the fairy fleet, two large canoes lashed together by a platform, which was canopied by a glittering roof and dazzling with scores of bright lamps. From this came the music, and on the stage females danced in honour of their god.

On floated the tiny lamps, and on swept the glistening canoes and gay dancers, towed by two large war boats. A fairy scene was that, but it swept by, and soon was lost in the winding of the river.

Waiting no longer, Koonah left his hiding-place, and gliding up the river's bank to a more convenient distance, he plunged into the river, and swam boldly across to the *Saucy Jane*.

Outwardly, there was no change in the smuggler craft, but her decks were less crowded. Nearly thirty of her crew were on shore. Captain Grasper, ever careful of his men, had sent them there, and by the Viceroy's permission, a rough house or tent was erected away from the river, that his crew might have exercise on shore. Those on board had beguiled their

time by listening to the sounds on land, watching the races, and were now gazing after the fast receding fleet of lamps.

The glaring of fireworks and the clanging of music on shore kept them lingering on the deck, whilst leaning against the swivel on the platform were the captain and boatswain, both intent on smoking and glancing over the water.

Suddenly Grasper's quick eye detected something moving across the stream, ebbing slowly, and he directed the boatswain's attention to it. "Eh, Murdoch, what's up there? Coming up the tide, too. The head of a nigger; strand me if it isn't!"

"So it is, cap'n," returned the old smuggler; "and steering right on to the craft too!"

The interest of all on deck was soon aroused, and the coming head eagerly watched. The tars had not returned from shore to tell the news, so all were ignorant of the disgrace of Koonah, who stemmed the tide right manfully.

"Stand by there, lads, with a line," roared Captain Grasper, as the swimmer neared the vessel. "Heave, lad!" and away twirled the line, falling just over the native's head, who joyfully seized it, and clambered on board.



As he reached the deck, a roar of laughter from the crew at his strange appearance saluted him, and no wonder. His long black hair streaming over his back, whilst his almost naked body still retaining the painted marks of disgrace, and his harsh features, harsher with rage, rendered him a strange object.

"Silence, and belay that!" in a stern voice from the captain, checked the merriment of the crew, and the chief stepping down to the deck, beckoned the priest into his cabin.

The cabin door closed, the smugglers vented their jokes freely, and as the boatswain joined them he was surrounded and pestered with questions.

"I say, Pipes," cried one, "he'll want a lick o' grease and a rub down with a deck scraper, I guess, won't he?" This was received with a roar. "A small slice of sand and canvas, lad, to jist get the black off," said another. "Pshaw! Crapau, what do ye know of it?" cried a third; "the skipper 'll give him a coat of coal tar to kiver up spots like—that's what he'll do."

Before the boatswain could reply, the cabin door opened, and the steward came along the deck. "Gupta! Gupta!" shouted he, and the black cook stepped forward with a grin to those around,

saying, "Ay, ay, massa steward!" "Some hot water, Gupta," responded that worthy official, and as the cook hastened to obey, the tars surrounded the last comer.

"I say, old Swipes, grease is better than hot water, if it's for the pongee you want it!" "Won't cap'n want a hand or two!" "You ain't very steady you know, Swipes!" "Last time old craft gave a lee lurch she sent his head in a grog keg, and he's been shaky ever since!" Such, and a dozen more remarks, from a dozen voices, from all sides, pestered the steward, who without a reply, seized the water and hurried off, followed by a roar of merriment.

"Steady, lads, steady," said the boatswain; "don't get his monkey up, or skip will hear it." With this the men cooled down, and returned, some to the bulwarks as before, and some below.

In a very short time after this, the brigantine's gig came alongside, bringing the little doctor and three of the men who had seen the priest's disgrace. The mate was on shore with the remainder of the crew. This fresh arrival caused increased fun to the tars, who roared lustily at the description of Koonah going through the streets. From this they turned to the other sights, and by the time their yarns were spun

to so many separate groups, the night was far advanced, but just as they meditated going below, the cabin door again opened, and forth came the priest, but rather different in appearance. The paint was gone. His black hair was rolled in a good turban or headcloth, and his body enveloped in a large putso given him by Grasper. The captain followed him on deck, and the doctor came as far as the cabin door.

Summoning four men to the gig, Grasper said in an under-tone to his visitor, "Never fear about the money—that's all safe aboard here; the *Jane* is a bank that never breaks. Come and go when you like, or stop altogether, just as you please. We'll do that little job, only come in good time. It's a lucky thing my lads are ashore, and nothing's easier now they're there. I ought to start to-morrow, but I'll manage to stop a few days behindhand till the road's clear. But I say, Koonah, next time I must have all the story of my young chum. Hang that Seredan of yours. I'd serve him out if I got within reach of his carcase. Well, the youngster won't starve for a few days. Good night, friend: keep up your courage and we'll give those saints a yarn to spin afore long."

With a hearty grasp of the hand, the two allies parted, and as the light gig with Koonah on board pulled towards the Dallas side of the river, Captain Grasper watched her until lost in the gloom, and then, seeing the watch set, went below.

## CHAPTER XV.

## SHOODAGON'S VAULTS.

THE third day of the festival was drawing to a close. A rich flood of sunlight bathed Rangoon and its river, on which comparatively few vessels are seen, as the war canoes and others have left with the troops, but the *Saucy Jane* is still at anchor. One half of her crew are still on shore, but all are eager for the war. The old boatswain has dropped many broad hints that his superior intends doing something grand at the fight, and all are in joyful expectation. There is the brigantine sitting like a swan upon the water, with her bows down the stream, for the tide is at its flood. A light breeze in playful opposition to the tide sweeps gently down the river. The smuggler craft looks to advantage. Her tall slender masts and black heavy yards of great width are all up—foreyard, top-sail, to'gallant, and royal yards. We see now that, besides her mainsail, and the boom of a spanking length, she carries fore-trysail, gaff-topsail, main-top-

mast and to'gallant staysails, besides her stun-sails. With all sail set the *Saucy Jane* must ride over the waves like a witch. On board the men are gathered in groups, and all is ready for weighing anchor. Ropes are coiled neatly down, and windlass handles shipped. Long Tom is well covered up, and on the raised poop Captain Grasper, the mate, and the doctor are conversing. The old boatswain is on shore taking the command of the crew there.

"Heave in, Davies," said the captain to the tall mate; "we will catch this breeze and get down the river."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Man the windlass!" roared the mate in a deep voice, as he moved forward. The crew sprang to work, and the brigantine was all alive with activity.

"Take the messenger to! now, then, youngsters, man the capstan!" There's the mate's voice again. The younger hands ship their bars in the capstan aft, and get ready the tackle for hauling aft the heavy cable as it is hoisted in the windlass. All is ready, and the windlass and capstan manned.

"Heave with a will, lads!" shouted the captain, and the men commence heaving. A merry group are they: daring and fierce, but few would think those careless, merry tars were so accustomed to scenes of law-

lessness and villany. They heave with a will, and clank, clank, sounds the ponderous machine as it revolves, and the handles alternately rise and fall. "Start a song, Carlo!" cries one; and now the Spaniard, with a rich, manly voice raises the song, whilst they all keep time with their work and join heartily in the gay chorus. Well may the natives pause in their canoes to listen as the rough melody from rough throats sounds cheerily over the water.

Clank, clank, goes the windlass, and again the captain's voice is heard, but the singers cease not their song.

"Haul out the mainsail! Some of you idlers let fall the foretopsail t'gallantsail and royal! Cast off the gaskets of your jib and flying jib!" Away dash some of the hands, and soon the mainsail is set, and the other sails flapping loosely from their yards.

All this while, clank, clank, goes the windlass and the tars still swell the cheering melody.

"The anchor's aweigh, sir!" shouted the mate who was looking over the tars.

"Very well, Davies; heave her chock up. Now then, lads, topsail halyards!" Thus roared Grasper, while nearly a score clapped on to the foretopsail halyards, two or three clapped on beforehand, and

away the others ran with a cheering song, and soon the yard was mast-headed.

"Sheet home!" Rattle goes the chain through the blocks. See the sail gently filling, and the brigantine moving slowly through the water. The anchor was up and the men looked over the bulwarks watching the receding land. Pagodas, huts, trees, and all seemed to glide by. The topsail was enough, and as she gathered way through the water, the natives saw the *Saucy Jane* skimming rapidly down the river. They followed her with anxious glances, as on her depended the success of their fleet.

But it was not the captain's intention to make at once for the sea, and this the Burmese knew, for were not some of his crew still at Rangoon? They must be fetched; and after sailing several miles down the river beyond the bar, the anchor was dropped once more, and the sails again furled.

Leaving the brigantine at anchor in the quiet river, where the men had nothing but jungle on each side to gaze at, we will go on shore and make our way towards Shoodagon. We have noticed before, the broad road which at the entrance of the covered way crosses the one leading from the river. The road leading to the left runs to Kemmendine. Passing down



this road for nearly a quarter of a mile we get beyond the bustle of the town, away from the usual dwelling-houses, and notice two large buildings at a little distance apart and on opposite sides of the road. The one on the right, and nearest to the great pagoda, is a small kyoung with raised roof, embedded in trees ; the other building is a long, low house of bamboos and mats, roofed with leaves. Outside on the grass in front, are several of the brigantine's crew, this being their barracks. At first they were nearer the river side, but for some plausible reason the captain had shifted them to this lonely spot, and the men seemed well contented. Peeping within, we see it is one large room : around the sides are their arms stacked only, and mats and blankets for sleeping on and a few rude cooking utensils. Two or three of the seamen are over the way gazing curiously into the monastery, which the good-humoured priests allow, and seem pleased at.

There is little within to excite curiosity. It is a kyoung of the humblest class, consisting of one large square apartment ; and in the centre four carved pillars, rising from the corners of a slightly raised platform, support the roof. The floor and platform are covered with matting. There is no furniture, except benches in lieu of beds, and a few rush mats and household utensils.

Outwardly this forms a pretty object, the overhanging roof, or rather lowest roof, being supported by slender pillars, and on all sides rich groups of trees and foliage. The inmates are three priests only, but over the way the sailors seem merry and jovial, but are uncommonly civil to the priests. There is the old boatswain sitting on an empty keg and smoking his pipe, and by his side the much-loved can. The men soon increase in numbers, as the stragglers come dropping in from the town, and several are excited and boisterous. The kyoung is also filling, and by the time night had mantled the earth and the half moon had threaded her way amidst the clouds, as many as eight priests were assembled within for the night. Wearied with the labours of the day, they were soon buried in sound sleep; but not so the smugglers. The door was closed, but noises of revelry and bursts of laughter could be heard. The hours passed on; midnight came, but still the carnival was continued. But two figures approached quietly, and the door opening at their touch, a sudden lull in the merriment occurred, as the smuggler chief entered, followed closely by the priest Koonah.

A scowl passed over Grasper's face as he closed the door, and stood glancing around. He saw at once

the old boatswain seated on a large cask at the farther end, just in the act of delivering an oration to the crew around. In one hand was his pipe and in the other he clutched the can. The fumes of tobacco, smell of spirits, and abashed looks of the men, told their chief his orders had been disobeyed, and they had drunk freely.

Eyeing them with a fiery glance, Captain Grasper stood with one hand on the door just as he closed it, and his other tightly clenched. Those who ventured to glance at their angry chief saw him like a lion at bay. His boat-cloak had fallen off, and revealed his giant frame clothed in a tight-fitting Guernsey frock of dark blue. His broad belt carried a weighty cutlass and brace of large pistols, whilst huge fishing boots reached nearly to his thighs. A black tie hung loosely round his neck under the broad collar, and on his head a tasselled cap of blue. Those fierce eyes and that stern countenance at once awed the offending crew. Koonah, in the rear, looked on with amazement at this silent but strange scene, and felt uncomfortable.

"Whose work is this?" asked the captain, in a voice of thunder. A dozen voices murmured the boatswain's name.

"The boatswain's, is it?" cried the chief, with a deep sneer in his tone; "and what made you obey his drunken orders when you knew mine? Fools! like so many boys, you cannot curb your appetites. But curb or no curb, I'll have my orders obeyed, or know the reason why! You, Murdoch, shall remember this night. Bah! your brain is as soft as the priests' yonder—they worship wood and you grog!" The smugglers were cowed, but their chief continued, "Let to-night's work make amends for this folly. Up now, one and all! clear away this mess, and get ready!"

The captain opened the door and stepped out again, followed by the astounded Koonah; and the crew, sobered and abashed, sprang to work. But the drunken leader sat staring vacantly around; at length rousing himself, he descended from his seat, and went to work.

The things were soon removed, casks rolled away to a corner, and the smugglers all armed awaited their chief's return.

On leaving them, Grasper paced up and down the road, which was now dark and gloomy, with Koonah at his side. The walk cooled the captain's anger, and turning to his companion, he said, "I'll make some

of them remember this ; but now we must to work. Let us have a peep within !”

So saying, they crossed the road, and approached the kyoung. What want they there ? Surely nothing possessed by those penniless priests can attract their cupidity ? Whatever it was, the smuggler and the priest crept to the house and peered cautiously through the Venetian window. Apparently satisfied, and leaving Koonah there, Grasper recrossed the road and entered the hut, soon returning ; and his crew poured out into the road, silent and all submissive. Their plans were soon evident ; some of the men stationed themselves on the road as sentinels, others surrounded the kyoung, and the captain, with nearly twenty resolute and well-armed rovers at his back, quietly opened the door and stepped within.

All was still and dark. The unconscious priests slumbered soundly. The intruders soon produced a light, and rapidly obeying their chief's commands, they touched the sleepers, who, waking, tried to spring up, but were seized. Some struggled, but in vain ; some tried to shout for help, but the quick marauders stopped their cries, and the eight priests were speedily bound and gagged, and under the charge of some grim-visaged tars with drawn blades in their hands.

And what now? the seamen gazed around as if to inquire. The priests were bound, but where was the prize? They were not long in suspense, for Koonah, pointing to the raised platform, exclaimed to the captain, "There is the entrance."

The word was given. The matting seized and torn up, and a large flagstone, with an iron ring, disclosed. Strong hands grasped it, and with a vigorous tug it yielded. To the surprise, but gratification, of the smugglers—and no less to the surprise of the entrapped priests at its being discovered—a flight of stone steps appeared, leading down into the depths of the earth. All this was smartly done, and with little noise.

After examining the entrance by the light of a lantern, the captain turned to the boatswain, who had regained somewhat of steadiness; the chief's anger having sobered him. "Murdoch, remain here with ten of the lads. Keep within the house, and let those outside watch sharply. If any meddler chance to come this way, keep dark; if they pass on, well; if not, take care of them. Whatever comes, guard this spot; give them steel first, and if the row spreads, give them shot, but, at all hazards, keep the gangway clear. Now, lads," turning to those around

him, "see your lamps and gear all in trim; and keep in my wake."

As he uttered this, Captain Grasper, lantern in hand, stepped on to the dark stairs and disappeared below. Koonah followed, and, one by one, sixteen smugglers, well armed, some carrying lanterns, some with huge crowbars, and others with coils of rope, entered the trap-door, and passed from sight.

They descended in a spiral manner for some time, the steps scarcely wide enough for two to walk abreast. Beyond the noise of their feet on the stones, not a sound was heard. The lanterns threw a strong light around, but nothing was seen beyond damp walls and the steps winding still deeper into the earth. The men themselves were greatly puzzled, and whispered their conjectures one to another.

At length the steps terminated, and they entered a narrow, low-roofed passage or gallery, extending horizontally, but how far, or in what direction, they could not tell. Without pausing, the captain hastened on, closely followed by the priest and the crew in single file, each man's hand ready to grasp his sword-hilt.

Nearly ten minutes had elapsed since their entrance into this subterranean passage, and still the gallery continued. It was winding in its course,

and the ground very uneven ; walls wet and clammy. The captain and the priest conversed in low tones, and the men passed their merry jokes among themselves. Foremost of the gang was the powerful Dutchman we have seen before, called Dan. They were all picked men of the crew, and recklessness and daring were stamped on their weather-beaten countenances.

The gallery suddenly bringing them to a large iron-bound door, brought the party to a halt.

"Hillo ! Koonah," said Grasper, "here's a stopper for us."

"You have bars, captain ; force it open."

"But the row will be heard," suggested the captain.

"Fire off all your pistols, and the noise could not be heard above," replied Koonah.

"Well, then, here goes to shatter his timbers," said Grasper, with a lively tone ; and seizing, as he spoke, a weighty crowbar from Dan, he assailed the door. Using the bar as one would a spear, he strove to insert its point between the door and the framework

"Here, Dan," said he, "bring another priser." The powerful smuggler obeyed, and the two giants plied blow after blow, and at last one was inserted. With



a mighty wrench the door yielded slightly ; enough to disclose the lock.

“ Enough of this,” cried the impatient captain, and he drew a pistol from his belt, cocked it, and putting the muzzle to the lock, whilst Dan held the door open with the bar, Grasper pulled the trigger, and the loud explosion was followed by a crash, as the door opened. The report rang through the vault, and echoed along the passage.

Resuming his lantern, Grasper again advanced, but a few paces brought them to another passage, crossing the one they came by. Turning to the left was to be seen a large chamber or hall, with arched roof, and in the sides three other passages.

“ Which is it, Koonah ?” asked the captain, as he paused to examine this place.

“ That passage,” replied the priest, pointing ahead. “ But, captain,” he continued, “ leave him alone until we are ready to depart.”

“ Well, a few minutes more wont spoil his beauty,” responded the chief, “ so let’s bear away for the strong room.”

They now turned to the right, and the passage, after extending nine or ten yards, again terminated in a massive door. Once more the bars were employed, and

after many vigorous blows the wood yielded, and the lock was forced. The sounds reverberated through the vaults with a peculiar noise, and the smugglers paused to listen if it had been heard elsewhere. No! Still as the grave were those deep vaults.

Grasper now saw before him a flight of steps rising immediately from the opened door, up which he instantly ascended, followed by the men.

Koonah now talked softly with the captain, explaining the intricacies of the place, and as they passed the first arched opening, he said, "This, captain, leads to another neighbouring kyoung. This one," as they passed the second, continued he, "contains cells, sometimes used for the Boa's private prisoners, but known only to the priests."

Thus they went on until the third arched passage was reached, into which, at Koonah's direction, the smugglers turned, one remaining with drawn blade to watch the stairs. A few paces brought them to a door bolted from without, and unfastening this they entered; but a second door, stronger and better secured, arrested their progress. Koonah again assured the captain no noise could be heard above, and the crowbars were set to work.

It would have been a strange thing if those

smugglers had been foiled. Determined to succeed, they toiled lustily, and soon, to their delight, the massive door gave way, and a glance at the interior assured each that their labours would be well repaid.

A large, lofty room, with the roof supported here and there by huge pillars, was filled with chests in different assortments. Gods were there in abundance, indeed it might have been the manufactory for them, they were in such numbers, for all the rovers knew. These were covered with gilt, as likewise were the pillars, and the rays of the lanterns reflecting therefrom, as from mirrors, contrasted with the deep shadows and distorted figures of the smugglers, as projected on the walls, formed a strange and unearthly scene.

A huge idol, as white as snow and decked with gilt and small pieces of looking-glass, with two large grotesque griffins at its sides, kept guard over a great chest, bound with a polished metal.

"What does that contain?" asked Grasper of the priest at his side, looking at him at the same time. Koonah was lost in thought, and seemed not to hear this remark. The presence of his god in so many representations, and the solemnity of the spot, awed him and brought a sudden revulsion of feelings. A

strife was in his heart, but it was of short duration. Revenge and habitual reverence waged war, but his thirst for retribution on the cruel Seredan, and the thought that now he could not retrace or undo what he had done, steeled his heart afresh, and shaking off as much as he could his superstitious feeling, he replied, "In that chest, good captain, are five hairs from the head of Guadama, our last Boodh, but do not dare to touch it, for it is said such a daring act would cause those griffins to have life to protect their charge." The priest uttered this with a grave voice, but Grasper burst into a laugh, and replied, "Well, as for the griffins, a bout with them would be right good sport, but seeing I don't need a wig we will leave Mr. Guadama's poll alone. What do these chests contain?" As he spoke he stalked to several god-guarded piles of boxes, painted green, and kicked them with his heavy boot.

"In them is kept the gold to gild the great god within the temple above, and also scented woods, and many silk banners," replied the priest.

"We'll pass that lot by also," said Grasper. "Now what are in those fellows?" striking a pile of small metal-bound chests, painted with a snowy white.

"Ah, therein are the precious stones and the bars

of gold for you, good captain," responded Koonah, with a smile.

That smile found a reply in the broad grin which spread over the smuggler's face; and glancing over his rich prize, as though to calculate the possibility of seizing all, he replied—

"Ah! ah! my boy, these are the ones for me. That's the metal I like the ring of. Here you are, my lads," he continued, turning to his crew, who had been taking a thorough inventory of all the articles, and handled the goods in a most irreverent manner. "To work at once, lads; put a lashing round each chest. Rather heavy, I guess; but we'll make separate loads of the lot. They're small, though, and two hands apiece ought to manage them. Bear a hand." To work they went with a right good will. The lanterns were placed on the floor, and directed by Grasper, the men put a stout lashing around each of the snow-white chests, until their lines were expended. With the readiness of thorough sailors, each chest was fitted with a rough becket at both ends. All this was done, with many a joke between, from the delighted smugglers, who blessed their lucky stars for this prize, and blessed again when the chests were lashed. "Now, lads," spoke the chief, "up with the

little articles. Here, Dan, call in the lad outside ; we must have all hands to work here ; sixteen of you must manage eight of those, my lads," continued he, whilst the smuggler addressed hastened out to call in the sentinel, who speedily entered.

"Slide them down the steps," cried Grasper ; "bear a hand, now." The strong men seized the chests, two to each, and were about to move, when the captain exclaimed, "Hillo ! here's our bulls'-eyes ! Here, Koonah, you pucker on one, and go ahead to show the way. I'll light the rear with another, and we'll leave the rest for the next turn."

The priest did as directed, and light in hand, stepped into the passage. The men, heavily laden with the chests, although they were very small, followed him, but more slowly. They passed through the doorway, and out to the passage, but Captain Grasper remained behind. He hastily scanned the vault once more, counted the remainder of the chests, and then taking a lantern, was about to follow ; but a thought striking him, he turned back, and taking another light he then left, closing the heavy door, and with a lantern in each hand he hastened on. Listening a few seconds at the passage-entrance for any noise above, he found all was as still as death, save

the sound of his own men going down the steps ; he then also descended and soon overtook the party.

They went slowly, letting the heavy chests slide down ; and on reaching the bottom they raised them by their rope handles, and turned down the passage up which they came at first. Grasper placed one lantern on the last chest, and speaking a few words of command to Dan, who was one of its bearers, he let them pass on.

The smuggler chief remained alone, and stood in the centre of the passages where they crossed. By the light of his lantern he saw the passage and open door at his back at the foot of the steps. To his left, the dark passage up which his men had passed, and to his right a similar passage, with a like massive door guarding it, whilst in front the arched way extended a few paces and then expanded into the rude chamber we have seen. A few glances on all sides showed the smuggler his position. Had any of the priests above chanced to descend at that moment into those depths, what a sight would have greeted him !—that giant form and picturesque costume ; the light gleaming on the naked cutlass in his belt, and on the polished barrels of his pistols and belt-buckle. But the smuggler thought not of priests, as he stepped

boldly towards the passage right ahead, until he came to the door of Aungua's prison. A smile played over the captain's face as he listened for any sounds that might catch his ear, but he heard nought. All was still within, apparently as if the prisoner slumbered.

"The boy sleeps well if he's not heard the row," soliloquized Grasper, and shooting back the strong bolts, he flung open the huge door with a powerful hand, and holding the light above his head, he shouted in a loud voice, "Ahoy, lad! What cheer, Aungua?"

"Is it you, captain?" responded a voice with quick tones."

"Ay, lad, it's me; I'm come like an angel—eh! lad, what have those sharks done to you?" exclaimed the smuggler, with an air of alarm, as Aungua stepped forward to the light, and Grasper saw his thin face and disordered appearance, and eyes gleaming with an unnatural fire. With real surprise and anger mingled in his countenance, the fierce smuggler grasped Aungua's hand with the clench of a true friend.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.

THE Yumadong or Anonpeo mountains, rising from 3000 to 4000 feet above the level of the sea, extend in a north and south direction, dividing Burmah from the territory of Arracan. These bold mountains, covered to the summit with forests of teak and sycamore trees, interspersed with noble groups of bamboos, plantain, cocoa, and other palms, are rugged and precipitous in parts, forming an impassable barrier. There are but few passes crossing the ridge, and those are narrow gorges or defiles, which a few well-armed and brave men could maintain against vast numbers. As we descend the mountains towards the west, rich clusters of eastern fruit trees cover the land with lasting verdure, and many rushing rivers water the fertile plains.

Arracan is a narrow strip of land barely eighty miles in width at its greatest, bounded on the west

by the Indian Ocean, and on the east by the Yumadong, which shooting out many spurs into the narrow plain at its base, gradually encroaches on the land towards the south, until it is washed by the ocean waves.

To invade this country, a descent can only be made from the seaside, and that in only a few places, owing to its numerous islands, shoals, and mountain ridges. Should a descent be made, a bold, hardy race of people of the plain, backed by the resolute and fearless mountaineers, must be overcome.

A few years previous to the date of our tale, the Burmese Emperor planned and executed an attack on this territory. Victory crowned the invaders; they conquered the Arracanese, but did not subdue them. The chieftains watched for every opportunity of regaining their land, but the Burman Boa at this season of war called many of the conquered warriors to aid in his coming struggle with Siam. From the western side of the Yumadong, a noble view of the land and distant ocean presents itself; and from the east the eye could roam for miles over the plains and rivers of Burmah, until they rested on the forest-crowned mountains which,

running north and south, divide that land into two immense plains, through which roll the mighty Irrawaddy and the more distant river of Sitang.

At the foot of the towering range of Yumadong are scattered the towns and villages of Arracan, possessing little beauty; but one small village, situated on the bank of a wide river, now attracts our attention. This river has its rise high up in the mountains, from whence it descends here and there in roaring cascades, again winding slowly through the dense forests, until it is joined by other streams from the southern side. At the junction of one of these streams, winding round the base of a lofty mountain spur, is located the little village just mentioned.

From a distance, little can be seen except lofty trees, and the mountain and forests in the rear; but on approaching, we find several strongly-built houses, surrounded by a formidable stockade of some twelve feet in height. Within a few yards of this stockade rolls the river. The houses, built of wood and bamboos, are thatched with leaves, and rest snugly at the mountain's foot. Leaving it, we pass through the village and fall into a

narrow track leading up the mountains. Rough and dangerous is the way, fit only for the active dwellers on these hills to traverse. Clambering over rocky ridges, and diving into dense clumps of forest trees, over hills and down into wild glens, on we pursue our course, and at length reach the brow of the spur. This is one dense forest, dark and gloomy, wherein prowl fierce animals and scarcely less fierce men. The Burmese tyranny has driven many of the brave men of Arracan to the mountains, where they wait a day of retribution and redemption.

Meeting neither animals nor men, we might thread our way through these tangled wilds; all around deep silence and grand solitude. The valleys below are no more seen. Hills and ravines, forest trees and bare rocks meet the gaze on all sides, and above the bright blue sky canopies these mountain wilds. All pathway is here lost, and the traveller, ignorant of his position, might wander and soon lose himself, and become a prey for the savage brutes that roam these giant woods.

For nearly twenty miles this mountain spur continues, until it regains the parent range, running north and south. Here there is little change, but as

we journey more to the north, the range becomes more bare and rocky. Huge masses now stand isolated, and the ravines become deep and precipitous. Frowning fissures, yawning gulfs, and towering heights, covered with foliage on all sides, give a grand and majestic aspect to this solitary scene.

Words cannot describe the grandeur of such scenes. The reader must climb the mountain heights of Anonpeo ere he can fully comprehend their sublimity and awful stillness.

Thirty miles to the north of the junction of this spur and the gigantic range, the mountain rapidly becomes lower in height, and even more wild and rugged, while the forests are seemingly more dense and tangled. Suddenly a deep gorge is seen crossing the whole range; a narrow and rough pass. On one side rises an abrupt rock, jutting from a deep forest. A narrow pass winds round this precipice, and on the right it terminates in a frightful ravine. From the eastern side, the rude track winds up from the plains of Burmah; far, far down in the distance, and as it rounds this huge rock, it plunges suddenly into a forest of teak, and descends the mountain side into the valley of Arracan.

Up this pass, from the Burmese side, a long and heavily laden caravan of eight unwieldy waggons, each drawn by sixteen yoked buffaloes of the country, are toiling heavily. Burmese warriors, mounted on small fleet horses, and armed with long spears, escort them, whilst a few travellers drag on in the rear, some on foot, and a few on fatigued horses. The waggons are covered, to keep off the rays of the sun, but now they fall faintly, and the bright orb is taking a farewell glance at the mountain-tops, for it is late in the day. Females and children ride under the friendly coverings, and the waggons contain rich merchandise, brought from many long miles. For greater protection, travellers have joined the caravan, and altogether they form a picturesque party, while the shouts of the drivers, urging on their slow teams, echo from rock to rock. Compared with the vast scenery around, how little the caravan appears!

Eager to descend towards the Arracan plains before night mantles the scene, the travellers press on, and by word and blow urge on the already tired buffaloes. One by one the horsemen defile around the towering rock, and the eight waggons slowly follow, and the travellers with them, other horsemen bringing up the rear. On a sudden, the leading warriors rein

up their steeds, and face towards the dark forest on their right, with evident signs of suspicion and alarm.

Their quick ears had detected something, but before their surprise had reached those in the rear, sharp twangs were heard, and several arrows whizzed through the air. A fierce yell from the forest now greeted them, and as a Burmese horse, struck by an arrow, reared and plunged, and the warriors boldly formed into a body of defence, great numbers of men armed with spears and shields sprang from the covert. As they advanced rapidly, some sent another flight of arrows, and a horse of one of the travellers was pierced in the flank. The smarting animal plunged madly, to the imminent danger of its rider, and then darted with terrified speed away towards the enemy, a second arrow struck the helpless rider, and the maddened horse dashed down the steep pass, bearing its wounded master. The Burmese had instantly strung their bows, and replied with flights of arrows at the foe. They came, and with a few bounds the bows were cast aside, and a terrific charge was made upon the brave defenders of the caravan.

The struggle was fierce, but brief. A Burmese

warrior, unable to combat equally with a foe, because of his rearing steed, was hurled, without a cry, into the deep ravine—the others were overcome, and the caravan was surrounded by nearly a hundred strong, well-armed mountaineers. One man appeared to be the leader of this band, but his face was covered in a peculiar manner by the skin of a tiger's head, which hid his features like a mask, and a part of the splendid skin fell over his back, reaching to his waist. As he strode from waggon to waggon, directing his men in a low voice, this chief presented a strange appearance. He was tall and muscular; his arms were bare, and also his legs from the knee down, and his feet protected by hide moccasins or sandals. Armed with shield and spear, the tiger-headed chief directed the movements of his men, who feared not to show their broad manly faces. With great alacrity the caravan was unloaded, and the choice merchandize scattered over the pass in confusion. With the skill of adepts in the trade, the mountaineers selected the most valuable, but were remarkably gentle to the females and the little ones, though the men received many hard blows and affronts.

Each man appeared to know his duty and allotted share, and all were busy making up bundles of goods.



By this time the chief had mounted a crag at the base of the huge rock, and looked down on the busy scene at his feet. Like some fierce demon of fairy lands he stood there leaning on his spear, gazing through his tiger mask at the busy mountaineers and the discomfited travellers, helpless and disarmed. Suddenly he raised a small bugle, or conch, to his lips, and blew a shrill blast, which echoed from tree to rock, and over the dark ravine in a hundred blasts. The mountaineers raised their respective loads to their shoulders, some guarding the rear, and plunged again into the forest from whence they issued. The Burmese warriors and the poor helpless travellers watched their disappearance, and then saw the strange visored chief spring from the rock and also plunge into the forest shade.

They were now left alone. Stripped of arms, but with their horses, waggons, buffaloes, and remnants of goods scattered in wild confusion over the pass, they were a forlorn sight. The poor merchants wrung their hands in grief at all their hopes thus blasted. The women wept, and the terrified children clung to them. The shock passed, the men now began to bestir themselves. The warriors, regaining their national composure, ventured some hearty

grins at the calamity, but good-naturedly helped to reload the waggons with the remaining merchandise. But this was a long and a tiresome task.

Let us follow the mountaineers. The chief soon joined them, and taking the lead, he plunged deeper into the huge wood. They well knew its windings, and trod smartly. Laden but lightly, they sprang along and soon turned more to the left. Their course now was downward, but still in the forest; again they seemed to retrace their steps, but all in silence. In truth, they were returning to the mountain track leading to the pass; but their intention was to cross it lower down, on the Arracanese side, and thus evade pursuit, while they knew the travellers would be long before they could continue their journey.

They neared the track which wound through the forest, but here the chief hastened on ahead, for he had seen something on the ground. The men followed, seeing their leader stop; and soon surrounding him, saw stretched across the track a horse, and under him, entangled with the trappings, stunned and bleeding, the owner. A broken arrow, still sticking in the horse's flank, told the tale. This was the steed that dashed down the pass. Blinded with

pain, he must have swept down the track, and striking against a log, was hurled to the ground, breaking its own leg and stunning its wounded rider.

A glance showed this to the mountaineers. The chief, with a hasty look at the wounded man, whose face he could not see, gave a few words of command and sprang across the road and into the woods again. The mountaineers raised the wounded traveller, senseless and bleeding ; and then leaving the horse a feast for the savage beasts of the forests, they followed their chief.

Whilst they are making their way through the woods, we will hasten on ahead and take a more leisurely peep at the village nestling so securely at the base of the mountain spur jutting from this imposing range. We have noticed a fine river winding its way at the base of this spur, and mingling with the larger river flowing westerly to the ocean. Here they form a broad and sometimes rapid flood, having a small grassy plain, quite bare of shrubs or trees, at their juncture. At the rear of this green plain stands the village, embedded in lofty and thick trees, surrounded by a massive and high palisade, of which we get glimpses here and there between the trees ; and the dark-brown housetops are seen peering

above. In the rear of all, the mountain, gradually at first and then abruptly, rises, clothed with dense clumps of forest trees. Protected in front and on both sides by the rivers, and in the rear by this natural barricade, the village affords a secure shelter for the mountaineers to whom it belongs. On the river bank opposite to the village may be noticed a well-beaten track leading to the water's edge, and this is again continued on the village side, leading to the stockade, where it enters a narrow postern.

For a considerable distance in front of the village extend wide tracts of meadow land, variegated with groups of shrubs and trees, which gradually thicken in the distance until they become a complete wood. On these fertile tracts numerous buffaloes and sheep are browsing, whilst some of the long-horned buffaloes are enjoying the river by lying down near the banks, until nothing but their heads appear above the surface. A few horses cropping the grass, several attendant shepherds guarding their charges, and numerous light canoes moored at the village side, complete this picturesque scene.

Entering the stockade, we find the village of much greater extent than the few housetops seen from without led us to expect. Well-built huts of timber,

neatly roofed with leaves ; numerous dwellings of a lighter kind, made of bamboos and mats, are arranged in romantic clusters, with large spaces of cleared grass land between. Towards the centre of the village fewer trees are growing, the houses are larger and of a better quality, and apparently in the centre of all is a large and deep stone well surrounded by nearly a dozen young females drawing water, chatting gaily, and then carrying off their pitchers on their shoulders. Women and children, and a few men, with numbers of dogs, give the village an air of activity.

Passing still further to the rear, we come upon a large but low-roofed house, surrounded by a light palisade, and standing in a large cleared space. In the rear of this house other huts cluster, the trees are more thickly planted, and the pathway terminates in the strong postern, leading at once to the mountain path.

Pursuing our way no further, let us examine this house, doubtless belonging to the head man of this mountain community. It is similar to the other wood houses, but much larger, and the interior apartments contain hunting weapons and warlike accoutrements.

Out of the ground behind the dwelling rises sud-

denly a high knoll, or lofty mound, on which, buried in evergreen shrubs, a small grotto stands. From this high position a view of the whole village, at intervals between the trees, presents itself. Lounging around the base of this shrub-crowned knoll are some men and an old sour-looking native woman. Low voices come sounding down the steep slopes ; and, attracted by these, we mount a narrow, rude flight of steps, and reach the clump of evergreens. Voices are heard within, and come apparently from female tongues, but the language is different from that of the natives below. Birds from another wood are warbling here.

Not rude enough to enter, but curious enough to listen, let us seat ourselves behind this shrub hiding the grotto, and try to catch the sound only a few feet from our resting-place. As we listen, the voices cease, and now strains of sweet harp-like music swell forth from the grotto ; and soon a female voice, in company with the music, comes sweetly from within.

The simple but sweet song ceased, and the same voice continued, speaking to some one within, " Dear mistress, you must keep up a stout heart. Something within tells me we shall have glad news soon, and

then I shall hear my little dove warbling once more ;  
but now you are so thin and sad."

"Ah, my faithful Loo," a voice replied, which sounded in familiar tones but with much sadness, "I also feel convinced we shall soon hear of dear Aungua, or else of good old Momien, but I cannot help being sad. I cannot explain this to you, dear Loo, but I have firm faith in my God that all this is for some good, and I feel assured they are both safe. But, again, although in spirit I am thus cheered, my poor heart is weary at this long separation, and these strange events bewilder my poor brain. I believe the Lord has brought Aungua and I together. He has apparently sent me his blessing through him ; made Aungua my help and guard. My heart is entwined around his, and the more I love Aungua the more I feel lifted above the things of life ; we seek the good of each other's immortal souls, and thus we are not obstacles but helps on our journey home to our blessed Saviour."

"Ah, dear mistress," replied the maid, "I wish I knew more of your religion, it makes you so happy ; but then your joys seem so different to what I call joys. Why is it, dear mistress ?"

"I am little learned in such matters, Loo, but I

can tell you what I think. Our joys are different from those of the world; they are indeed higher and better; but we often feel happy and yet look solemn, because we see the sins and depraved condition of the world around us. We know our path is full of danger, and this makes us serious, whilst withal there is peace and happiness in our hearts, because of our Lord's love dwelling there. Dear Loo, you must seek to experience this, as only those who know can tell."

"Well, dear mistress, I am often thinking of it, but I am puzzled that you do not bow down to any gods we can see. You have all your joys and your worship inward. It is so different from our people."

"Ah, dear Loo, I wish good Momien were here to explain this to you, but I remember that he told us that our soul was the chief part, and that it required feeding and clothing like the body, but with spiritual food and raiment; also that the *soul* worshipped, and it must worship a spirit, and not anything bodily like the gods of our poor people. I cannot explain this better now, dear Loo, but my religion gives me joys I knew nothing of before. It makes me see things so differently. The people of the world around seem running here and there, chasing dreams. We who



are not going their way can look down and see the folly of their endeavours. Well, Loo, I cannot talk as I could wish ; but do not think because my poor heart grieves, and I pine away from dear Aungua, and feel sad at his uncertain fate, do not think that I am not happy in my religion, or have no faith in my God. I have, and can say now it is good, although my poor body wears away with watching."

"Dear mistress, I have been very watchful, and learnt all I could about this place, but I cannot make it out yet. Sometimes I see the chief here, but he never asks to see you. Wherever I go, I am treated kindly, but watched like a tiger watching its prey. Sometimes the village is crowded with men all armed, who come from the mountains, but to-day they all seem off somewhere."

"Oh, Loo, is there no chance of escaping from this prison ? It is now five weary days since we have been here."

"I see no chance for us," replied the maid. "If we could get up into those mountains how could we live ? The wild beasts would devour us. If we cross over those plains in front we are as badly off. I can only see one way, and that is, to take a canoe and go down the river ; but then, where would it take us ? Oh, mis-

tress, we are shut in. Before we could reach the river we must get out of this village—and we are so watched.”

A silence ensued, and then the mistress, who was no other, as the reader will perceive, than Domea, replied with a sobbing voice, “There is nought for us but to remain here. Good Momien will lose no time in tracking us, I know: but dear Aungua, where can he be? Oh, Loo, sometimes I feel as if—”

Here poor Domea ceased, and we can hear nothing but sobs. Suddenly a confused noise below made the females hasten out of the grotto, and look down upon the village. Vast numbers of mountaineers, some carrying game they had hunted on the hills, were pouring in through the rear postern, and at their head walked the powerful Arracanese chieftain whom we saw with Munris, the Viceroy of Prome. He is armed with spear and shield, with a bow at his back, and a well-stocked quiver hanging at his side. Across his right arm the chief carries a skin of some animal.

Domea and her faithful maid, Loo, gazed down on this chieftain and his band defiling in. Several of the men carried burdens, and in the rear of the main body a little group were bearing some sense-

less and motionless form. The mountaineers passed outside the little palisade. Domea, with eyes dimmed by tears, saw nothing unusual, but Loo with her keen glance detected something in the passing group below, which made her lean forward with intense eagerness and grasp her mistress's arm, until Domea shrunk with the pain.

The men passed on and were lost behind the dwelling-house.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## DEATH IN THE VAULTS.

RECOVERING from his surprise at Aungua's careworn appearance, Captain Grasper said, "Strand me, lad, but if I had half an inkling this would be the fun, I would have blown the priestly den and all its thieves off their perch before I would have given you to them! Forgive me, Aungua; it's not often I ask that of any man: but, lad, you've got to windward of me somehow;" the smuggler said this in a very serious tone.

"Say no more, captain," replied Aungua; "at first I did think you cruel in betraying me so; but I see you knew not to what you were giving me over. But how came you to find me out?"

"Eh, lad, that's a long yarn to spin. One of the yellow sharks got into a rumpus and blew the gaff all about you to me; so here I am with a few lads on purpose to let you out. But, Aungua," continued the captain, "let's belay this, and get aboard the *Saucy*

*Jane*, and there overhaul matters a bit. Come." Grasper turned round and moved off, followed by Aungua, who was bewildered at this sudden change of events. As if mechanically he walked after his brawny deliverer, scarcely noticing whither he went or what he left behind. A maze of thought was whirling within him, but, above all, his heart was lifted up to God in thanks for this escape.

Thus they continued, sometimes speaking to each other and sometimes silent. Aungua considering in his own mind of what the high priest had said concerning him being branded as a deserter, Monchaboo's death, and Domea's disappearance. Might they not have been mere lies to surprise him, and thus give the priest time to escape? At all events, he longed to hasten to Momien's house to learn the truth.

Grasper was also thoughtful. From Koonah he had heard most of the tale respecting Aungua and his lover. Her abduction he had also heard of, and Koonah had even told him of the plans of Munris Maywoon and the Arracanese chief, and also told the name of the village he heard mentioned. But the wily priest said nothing of Aungua's connexion with the old merchant; neither did he mention Domea's name. All this his cunning made him

suppress. How to save his young friend, and how to help him, now occupied the smuggler's thoughts. As they neared the steps leading to the small kyoung, Grasper suddenly paused, and turning to his companion, he said—

“When we get out above, Aungua, you will see the very pongee who trapped you ; don't be flurried, for if it had not been for him, you would have rotted in that hole yonder. Another thing, lad, you'll see the priests rather roughly handled, and their jolly lot of boxes tossed about in heaps ; but don't notice that either.” He said this as he knew Aungua's Christian character, and therefore kept him in the dark respecting his own career. “One thing more,” he continued ; “I know all about your lass and your old friend. You must come aboard with me first. I won't take no, lad ;” as he saw Aungua about to object. “I say you *must*. It's for your good, and then we'll settle how to steer.”

“But, captain,” broke in Aungua——

“Never mind the buts,” replied the smuggler. “Trust me, Aungua ; remain ashore and you're lost ; come aboard, and I'll explain all, and tell you how to find your friends. Here we are at the gangway. Don't notice what you see, but keep close in my wake.”

They had reached the stairs and ascended the rough stone steps. The trap soon was neared, and the men were seen standing around waiting their chief, who soon stepped out into the monastery, followed by Aungua. Well might he be surprised at the scene before him. The room was lighted up by many lanterns, and crowded with the captain's men, all armed, and flushed with the excitement of their work. Keeping behind, he detected the harsh, disagreeable features of Koonah, his old betrayer and gaoler, but now apparently the cause of his deliverance. He saw also the eight priests bound and gagged, under guard. The room was in confusion with heavy boxes, painted with the sacred white, heaped up around.

Aungua had little time to reflect on this, for Grasper having drawn the boatswain aside, whispered some commands to him and also speaking in a low tone to Koonah, left the kyoung, still followed by Aungua. Grasper hastily crossed the dark road to the sailors' house, and there wrapped himself in his own boat cloak and gave another to Aungua. He lingered here for a few minutes to give his men time, and when he stepped again into the silent road, the eight chests were on their way to the river side, carried by a strong

body of rovers, whilst the remainder, with the boatswain and Koonah, still held the kyoung.

Following this party without seeing them, the chief and Aungua walked slowly, conversing in low voices. The night was dark, and excepting the usual sounds of music, insects, jackals, and conches, Rangoon was slumbering. Unnoticed, the smugglers passed through the streets to one of the wooden wharfs, where the lugger and a quarter-boat were moored with a guard of ten sailors. Before the captain had arrived the chests were stowed, some in each boat, and well hid from sight by tarpaulins. Aungua suspecting nothing, entered the smaller boat. Grasper ordered the fresh rovers to return with the others, and taking a crew of four of those who brought the chests in the quarter-boat, he saw six seat themselves in the lugger and keep her off the wharf riding by a painter; then at a word the crew of his own craft shoved off into the stream. A fresh breeze was playing down the river, a mast was stepped, lug sail hoisted, and the boat skimmed lightly down.

The boatswain and his companions had not waited long in the monastery, when the fresh smugglers and the remainder of those who carried the chests to the



boats returned. Leaving sentinels and a strong guard over the poor bound priests, another party, headed by Murdoch and Koonah, descended the vaults, carrying lanterns, crowbars, and lines as before. But the old boatswain and Dan the Dutchman had again disobeyed their chief's orders, and indulged freely in grog. In truth, they were so far drunk as to be incapable of giving clear orders. Seeing this, the priest took upon himself to lead the band, and they, knowing the intimacy between him and their captain, readily obeyed his orders, but growled at the boatswain and Dan for their folly, well knowing the anger it would cause in their commander.

The band descended the steps, wound through the long passages, up the other flight, and entered the treasury vault again. Here they found the lanterns still burning, and the mute gods keeping useless guard over the treasure chests; and here the men, unrestrained by their captain, after they had lashed more of the white chests, roughly forced open the green ones and scattered the gaudy contents over the floor. Banners were strewn about in all directions. The gods, too, received many hard blows from the crowbars. Wildly laughing over the havoc they had made, the smugglers next turned to the huge chest

said to contain some sacred hairs from the head of Guadama. Dan approached it with a monster bar in hand, shouting to his comrades, "Come on, boys, let's see what this chap holds!" Koonah sprang forward to prevent the intended desecration, but recoiled before the drunken smuggler's scowling glance, as he muttered in his guttural voice, "Avast there, brown skin, or I'll shiver your timbers with this little spike." Then incensed by this attempted opposition, the smuggler, maddened by drink, turned again to the chest, and with several terrific blows crashed open the lid. The men crowded round to see the contents, but they found it empty!

Laughing heartily at this deception, the smugglers betook themselves to work, and soon were sliding the heavy prizes down the steps, but Murdoch and Dan remained staggering behind. They reached the bottom, and as they turned into the passage leading to the monastery, a sudden idea seemed to flash across the tall boatswain, and under its impulse he cried, "Hold hard, boys; hold hard!" The men paused, and looking round, saw the old man approach the door heading the passage to the right. "I'm going to have a peep in here, boys!" he continued.

"Fools! fools!" cried the priest, stepping before

the drunken smugglers; "fools, go not in there, or you go to certain death!"

"What's the old yellow sinner saying?" growled the rover, his eyes flashing fire. "Stop me, will you, ye nigger! take that for a warning." The boatswain following up his words, launched a heavy blow at Koonah, who tried to evade it, but the smuggler's arm was too quick and long, and the priest reeled against the cold wall. Recovering himself, he smothered his rage, and without a word turned up the passage.

"Come along, Pipes, or we'll leave you behind," cried one of the men, but Pipes was in no mood to be agreeable. The drink had blinded and maddened him. "Bear a hand, Dan, old boy," said he to the Dutchman, "we'll make a discovery." Muttering this with some fearful oaths, he seized a crowbar, and assailed the door. Dan, equally mad drunk, held a lantern, and also swore at the crew, who now left the two alone, and hastened on with their loads.

Lighted by one lantern only, the vaults looked grim and ominous. The blows of the smuggler on the ponderous door resounded through the gloomy depths with an awful sound, but the two powerful men still recklessly proceeded. In themselves

possessing giant strength, and well armed, what cared they? Drink had dispelled all common prudence, and chuckling at the idea of finding treasures unknown to their comrades, they plied the crowbar to the door, which was locked, but it soon yielded. The heavy door slowly opened to their pressure, and as the two men staggered in, it closed again with a dull sound.

They heeded not this. The passage was steep and down hill. They staggered on for several yards, though as yet nothing repaid their labours. Nothing disheartened, they still descended, and soon approached a small low door, covered with damp and slime, which had apparently been closed for years.

This time Dan plied the crowbar, and the old boat-swain held the lantern in his shaking hand. The lizards and reptiles were crawling about, and the air was close and suffocating. Still they plied the bar. The giant-like Dutchman at length inserted the point, and placing his feet against the opposite wall, put forth his utmost strength in one terrific wrench. The small door creaked and creaked—it was yielding! Another shift of the bar, another wrench, and the door flew open with a suddenness which threw the Dutchman to the ground, and at the

same instant the boatswain stumbled and fell. At this moment the lantern flew from his hand with a crash, and the light went out ! The smugglers madly swore at this calamity, and Dan staggered to his feet ; but all was as dark as a tomb, and the air was strangely suffocating.

"Hillo ! Pipes, where are you, chum ?" cried Dan, groping about.

"Oh, botheration to this hole ! Dan, lend us a hand," groaned the boatswain, floundering in the cold passage, and now becoming sobered.

"Stretch out your hand, Pipes," said the Dutchman, groping also in the dark for his comrade.

"Curses on this den !" growled Murdoch ; Dan ! Dan ! I'm choking ! What's this ? Help ! help us up !"

"I'm choking, too, Pipes. Hang it ! man, let's steer out of this horrid hole."

Dan felt and groped in the thick gloom, but found his comrade still prostrate. He tried to raise the tall form, whilst both men, with terrible oaths, cursed themselves and the place, and the unfortunate lantern. Dan tried again, but stumbled over his comrade, and fell heavily upon him.

"Curse you ! Dan. Get up ! get up ! what's this ? Here's a snake ; get up, I say ; I'm stifling ! Cap'n

Harry ! Hoi, Cap'n Harry ! Help ! help !" the boat-swain shouted in terrified tones, but his voice was becoming thick, and he was choking. From the door they had opened, small clouds of thick vapour were creeping up and filling the closed passage. These clouds became thicker and thicker, and came rolling up the dark vault in dense masses. The smugglers, now completely sobered, struggled and struggled hard to rise, but could not. In madness they grappled with each other. They shouted for help, but help there was none ! The deadly vapours increased, and they were gradually being suffocated. Their voices grew fainter and fainter, their strength left them, and at length they ceased to struggle. On rolled the vapours of death. The smugglers became stupified ; now murmured in faint tones ; even these now ceased—and without a groan, without a struggle, the giant men were soon in the iron, icy grasp of death !

Dark and silent as the grave were the vaults, and the rash, drunken men lay motionless, having fallen over each other—dead ! That scene was dark—dark as the tomb—but oh, how dark the awful fate into which those men had madly plunged ! Perhaps a long, long unending for ever of outer darkness and

gnashing of teeth ! Slaves to one of the vilest masters man can serve ; devotees of one of the deadliest gods the human soul can bow to : yielding up their souls in worship to drink, they have reaped the bitter harvest of their sins ; they have received their dreadful wages.

Whilst this awful scene was being enacted in the deep vaults of Shoodagon, that glittering temple, wherein less idolatry is practised than in the evil hearts of men, the quarter-boat, containing the smuggler chief and Aungua, had reached the *Saucy Jane*, and having stepped on board, Grasper drew the mate aside. Their short conference was followed by the other quarter-boat being lowered, manned ; and under the command of the tall mate himself, it shot away from the brigantine and disappeared in the gloom.

Seeing his visitor attended to in the cabin, the smuggler then had the sails loosened, and decks cleared for weighing anchor. The chests were hoisted on board, the yard-arm light trimmed, and ordering his crew to remain all on deck under arms, the captain returned to his companion. By this time Aungua had refreshed himself and was supplied with food. By Grasper's orders, the steward had provided him with a fresh putso, and his curly black hair hung

gracefully over his shoulders, but Aungua was ill at ease. The mystery of his capture, of the Seredan's remarks, had all to be cleared up more thoroughly, for Grasper had deferred this until they got aboard.

They were now seated in the pirate captain's own berth, the starboard stern cabin. It was fitted up simply. Against the ship's side was a neat cot, hung round with curtains, and triced up to the beams was a hammock. Nautical instruments and weapons of all kinds, with articles of wear, charts, boxes, and chairs, completed the fittings of the smuggler's cabin. In one arm-chair sat Grasper, and Aungua in another, whilst a large chart lay open on the smuggler's knee. He was speaking.

"Well, Aungua, I see how the wind blows. Those yellow foxes got foul of you just to help the Seredan's brother. I found that long-legged high priest a smart chap, but he was terribly near about the pagoda. Ah! ah! I guess he'll feel queer soon."

Grasper smiled at the idea of Symoo discovering the empty dungeon and the rifled treasury, but this idea he kept to himself. He had seen sufficient of Christians in his own land to know the folly of letting Aungua know his true character. The Burman saw



in Grasper merely a bold wanderer of the deep, and the exploits he had been engaged in were against the foes of Burmah. In truth, Aungua heard little of them, and what he did know, appeared to him no less lawful than the deeds of his Boa's war canoes and warriors. Grasper continued—

“And so the old man, the old merchant, I mean, tried to get rid of you by putting a stopper on your liberty. Well, all this, Aungua, I have heard from the pongee. At first he told me you had offended his god, or something of the sort; but now I see the matter clearly, and he has told me the right side of the yarn.”

“And what do you know of my friends, captain?” asked Aungua, impatient at this delay, and burning to be gone to see for himself the truth of what he had heard.

“What do I know? why this: the priest said he overheard your rival, the viceroy, and some chieftain ashore making arrangements to kidnap the lass; which they did; and it seems your old friend has weighed anchor and gone in chase.”

“Good old Momien!” ejaculated Aungua at this; but the captain continued: “Since then, bad things

have been said about you : the priest says they call you a deserter, and such like."

"But, captain," broke in his listener, "did the priest say aught concerning the old father's death?"

"Not a sound; and I guess that's all puff: if it is true, it's no loss, I should say."

"Nay, nay, captain," returned Aungua; "he is her father, remember."

"Ay, ay, Aungua, so he is. Well, you know I'm not over particular in what I say; but that's all right. Now the point is, what are you going to do?"

"I shall go ashore at once," replied Aungua, "and find out old Momien's servant, and learn for myself the real state of events; and then, with God's help, track the villains who have done this mischief."

"Very good, very good," replied Grasper; "and what after that, supposing you find them?"

"Well, captain, then I shall release her, and take her away from this evil place."

"Good again," said the smuggler, with a roguish smile; "but don't forget the rocks and shoals to steer clear off. First, Aungua, suppose they catch hold of you as a runaway, eh?"

"They shall not, captain," replied he, with a deter-

mined voice ; it will take you to capture me a second time."

"No fear of that," said Grasper ; "but if you clear them and reach the mountains, what then?"

"Ah, there I am driven up, captain," replied Aungua, with a sadder voice. "One of the mountain chiefs I know well. We have met in a strange manner, when first our Boa took Arracan, and since then we have been true friends ; but lately I have seen little of him ; and now, alas ! Berhing is at the war. Had he been at home, the difficulty would be solved ; but I trust in God to open a way for me even now."

"That's settling it spanking," said Grasper, seemingly delighted to picture obstacles to his young friend. He continued, "Put down that you get the little lass clear, and find your old chum, which course will you steer then, Aungua?"

"Oh, the same as we first intended, captain ; make our way to the Soongari by some means."

"Slashing again ; but I guess that looks well now ; but you'll never do it. Strong and bold as you are, as I well know, what can you do against so many ? No, no, Aungua, you can't do it ; but Captain Harry Grasper will, if any man or devil can !"

Aungua turned to the captain in amazement, and he saw he was in right good earnest.

"What do you mean, captain? You are going to the war?"

"All true, all true," replied Grasper; "but I mean this, Aungua. Just peep at this chart." Aungua did so, and remained leaning on the smuggler's chair. "Do you see this river? Well, that's the one which I fancy, from what the priest says, runs round the village the two blacklegs talked about. What's easier than for you to find your way there, and lay off and on, and find out all you can about the place, and such like; and then, keep a look-out for the offing, until you spy the muslin of *Saucy Jane* coming down upon you. A good dark night, and my boats' crews, and I'll warrant all the chiefs in the land won't keep Harry Grasper out, if he's a taste to come in!"

Aungua grasped the captain's hand, and spoke his thanks at this right good offer; but recollecting something, he said, "I thought you were going to the war, captain?"

"So I am, lad; but intend to make short work of that. Never fear; you shall see the *Saucy Jane* coming up hand-over-hand, and after we've done that

job, why, Aungua, strand me ! but I'll take you all aboard, and carry you every inch of the way to where you want to go. See," he continued, giving Aungua no time to speak, "see, here's the very river on the chart. Now, how d'ye like my plan ?"

Aungua's reply may be well imagined. He now saw the dark clouds chasing away, and the bright lining appear. Even his separation from Domea and his imprisonment he now saw contained wisdom and goodness, and he thanked God for it.

They had many arrangements to make, and the two, the bad, and yet in many ways honest-hearted rover, and the young Christian Burman, remained long in conversation.

The boats returned : the lugger and the quarter-boat well laden with men and prizes. Captain Grasper, leaving Aungua within for a few moments, stepped out on deck to know the success of the second expedition. Glancing over the bulwarks at the boats, he called out, "Are all safe, Davies ?"

The mate answered by getting on deck, and speaking a few low words to his commander, who appeared staggered at what he said. "The old fool ! I thought something of the sort would happen. I expected he

would slip his cable, but not in this way. And Dan as well, the best man of the crew. Well, well, Davies, it's no use groaning. Did you try to get them out?"

"Yes, sir," replied the mate; "but the priest said it was certain death for all who ventured there. He said something about his gods being offended, and some such humbug; but I tried my best, and finding the underground passage getting very suffocating, the men could not go further, and I made them return."

"Ah, they're dead enough, captain," said a voice at his side. It was the little doctor, who continued, "They must have opened some long-closed vault, and the pent-up gases, perhaps not killing them on the instant, soon made them powerless, and rapidly suffocated them."

"Perhaps you're right, doctor," responded the captain. "And now, Davies, get the chests on deck; hoist the lugger aboard, and there she'll sweat for some time, I guess. Keep the quarter-boat in the water and a crew in her."

Grasper then turned to Koonah, who had also come on board, and led him up on to the platform. He would not see Aungua; the captain desired the priest to accompany Aungua in his search on shore, but he

would not. He cared nothing about the Burman youth. All he sought was revenge, and for this he would remain near Shoodagon, and watch the result of his plottings.

Grasper went below, and soon returned with Aungua, who was now well dressed in the native costume. By his side was a sword, and in his hand a boarding-pike, which Grasper readily supplied, also giving him money to meet his wants on shore.

They both seated themselves in the quarter-boat, which was shoved off and pulled by lusty arms up the river to a convenient distance from Rangoon, where Aungua landed.

"Remember my promise, Aungua," said Grasper, as they parted; "take care of yourself and look out for the *Saucy Jane*. I'll make for the river and send a boat in, and mind you are on the look-out. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, captain," replied the Burman, and the boat was again speeding down the river. Day-break was near at hand, but as Grasper reached the ship, he found the anchor nearly aweigh.

The men sang cheerily at the windlass, sails were all loosed in readiness, and were soon sheeted home,

and yards hoisted. The brigantine was under sail again, and glided rapidly down the river. Koonah went on shore soon after, having made some arrangement with Grasper, who was sobered down and less avaricious for the time, since he heard of the awful end of Dan and the boatswain. But the priest cared not now for wealth. Revenge was his day vision and night dream. Revenge ! his object and his idol, before which all else must bow !

When the sun rose on Burmah, and glistened on the bright spire of Shoodagon, the brigantine could no more be found on the noble Irrawaddy river.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE SMUGGLER'S SCHEME.

"WARS and rumours of wars" kept Burmah in a state of continual ferment. Shembuan Minderagee Rau, the Emperor, seemed never satisfied. The more he gained in battle from his neighbours around, the more he longed to possess. Arracan, after a desperate resistance, he forced to succumb. The territories of Siam were also invaded, and, as we have before seen, the Burmese had captured many of their seaport towns, but failed in their attempt to capture the long-coveted island of Junkseylon. Possessor of such domains ; conqueror of many states ; emperor of all the Burmans, whom he ruled with a tyrant's power ; lord of the renowned White Elephant ; and even styled "Lord of the World," what more had Shembuan to desire ? Ah ! there is a strange fact connected with our nature : the more we have the more we covet. We all have some idol which we fondly cherish in the heart, which must be fed, and pampered, and pleased

even at the cost of all else ! Shembuan was not exempt from this. Power or dominion he bowed to ; and whenever he saw a chance of gratifying this passion, there he hurled all the force he could muster.

To visit this august monarch in his city of Ummerapoora would only increase our surprise at his intense love of power. There we should find the same striking divisions of Burmese dwellings as we find in the people themselves ; no middle classes, but all high or low, good or bad. The mass of the people content to live in humble, tottering houses of wood, or bamboos, or mats, and living on the humblest fare ; whilst rearing themselves high above the masses of society, are the high and proud and tyrannous noblest gentry, residing in substantial dwellings of wood ; and above all, the emperor, with his palace of bricks and wood, decked with the sacred white paint and glittering gold. The palace, approached by a flight of steps and guarded by two pieces of ordnance, is a magnificent building, extremely light and elegant. Rows of tall fine pillars, seventy-seven in number, support successive stage roofs, until the uppermost terminates in the sacred tee and lofty spire. This open-sided hall is the audience-chamber of the palace,

wherein Shembuan Minderagee Rau is wont to hold his court. When the courtiers are all assembled, clad in rich long robes of velvet or satin, scarfs, mantles, and high velvet caps, covered with gold flowers, and are all seated on the floor in expectation—not daring to gaze on a raised throne screened by a gilded lattice of great richness—suddenly the folding-doors of this screen fly open, and reveal the mighty monarch clad in white, crowned with a massive but somewhat unshapely headpiece, sitting in solemnity on his throne. Right and left before him are rows of silent courtiers; none in front, that when Shembuan casts his glance down the hall they may not light on any unworthy object.

One brief glance at this sacred sight, and the doors again close, and the emperor is seen by them no more for the day.

With all this pomp the worm of avarice was at the monarch's heart—he yearned for more.

Beyond this audience-hall is a large court, and then the palace itself, a stately structure, forming an imposing spectacle. These, with other buildings, some being royal granaries, are enclosed by a strong fort, square in form, and having at the corners four gilded temples of great height. The situation of Ummerapoora is

remarkably pleasant. Nestling at the base of high mountains on the east, which form a grand and imposing amphitheatre; to the west rolls the broad river Irrawaddy, and a large lake more to the south-east—both picturesque, with many boats and well-wooded islands. Looking down on the royal city, the spires, turrets, obelisks, and house roofs give it an attractive appearance, but not sufficient to appease the desire of its emperor.

Not content to enjoy the splendours of royalty, his mandate has been sent forth to the various viceroys of his empire, and at the head of a powerful army of thirty thousand warriors and twenty field guns, he himself marched southward, vowing vengeance against Siam, and with strong determination to wipe out the disgrace of the late repulse at Junkseylon. For a considerable time the bands of warriors had been assembling at Martaban, and at length the thirty thousand being all in readiness, commenced the march. This could not be done without great pomp. The various divisions of cavalry and infantry, armed with spears, swords, and muskets, bows and arrows, and shields, were all under their respective chieftains. The emperor himself was well mounted, and was surrounded by a large body of his Invincible warriors,

and accompanied by numerous native astrologers to divine the proper times for attack. A gay scene was this. The rich dresses of the leaders, their gilded umbrellas and chains of rank ; the waving banners, clashing of martial music, coloured dresses of the men, glittering arms, prancing steeds, and dense columns of foot soldiers, drew together thousands of spectators, who saw the brave army defile out of Martaban and fade in the distance, confident of their return being in triumph.

Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of them may never return ; wives may be widowed, children made fatherless, and hundreds of homes become darkened before they come back : but what matters all that if Shembuan's idol is pleased ? what cares he for his subjects' welfare if he be satisfied ?

Away went the army ; but we will not pursue their career in detail, but follow the course of the swift-sailing brigantine.

Having landed the priest Koonah further down the river, Captain Grasper carefully took the *Saucy Jane* under easy sail into the open sea, and then with a good spread of canvas and yards braced on the port tack, he stood across to Martaban. With a run of little more than six hours, he made the mouth of the

Salween river. The brigantine, true to the opinion we had first formed of her sailing powers, now showed herself a witch on the wave. In good sailing trim she dashed through the waters, tossed into tiny waves by the fresh breeze, and as she neared the land the sails were shortened. Grasper did not enter the river, for, from a small station on the point, a canoe put off giving him the information that a fleet of sixteen large war-boats under sail had lately steered to the south, expecting his vessel would overtake them.

The brigantine's sails were again set ; the helm put up, and away before the wind dashed the lively craft. Then sails were soon spread, and under a splendid press of canvas she bounded over the water, drawing many an acclamation of delight from the wondering Burmese, whose canoe was soon left far in her wake. The fleet was not far ahead, and in a few hours they could be seen by the look-out at the brigantine's fore royal-yard, and she rapidly overtook them ; but to Grasper's surprise the fleet had increased to nineteen vessels. Shortening sail to keep pace with his warlike companions, he hailed the chief war-boat, the commander of which came on board, and with little difficulty Grasper gleaned the intelligence, that just after leaving

Martaban the war-boats had fallen in with a fleet of five heavily laden merchantmen, bound from Siam to India with costly cargoes. He had at once engaged the foe, and had captured them, and having removed the choicest parts of the cargoes of two of the vessels to the others, they had sunk them so as to be less encumbered. The Burmese chief, a short portly warrior, was sitting at Grasper's cabin table whilst relating his success with a great amount of bombast, and he seemed to enjoy the smuggler's grog. Grasper heard this recital with pleasure, for it showed him what he might in all probability pick up in the same way.

"That's a downright slashing beginning, old friend," said he, turning to the chief, "and I guess we'll make a good haul before we've done. But what are the Boa's orders of the day?"

The Burmese chieftain managed to comprehend the captain's meaning; but Grasper finding a difficulty to express his feelings at all times in Burmese, interspersed his pet phrases in broad English, with which the chief was little acquainted. He contrived, however, to understand his host, and replied—

"The army, brave captain, cannot well reach the island in less than two weeks, and until then we must roam these waters to get what prey we can. In four-

teen days we must assault the island, and then having blocked the harbour, maintain our position there until our *Boa*, crowned with success, shall arrive."

"We had better keep within hail of each other; but how about the prizes alongside?" asked the smuggler.

"Ah, they will be kept by my war-vessels," replied the Burman.

"Wouldn't it be a safer plan to hoist their cargoes aboard here, and cast the vessels adrift?" suggested the captain.

"No, no! oh, no!" replied the chief, with an evident air of alarm; "the *Boa* will be better pleased to see the vessels and cargoes all complete, good captain."

"As you will, friend," said Grasper, with a thoughtful air, and then conversed with the doctor, also at the table, for some considerable time, and then went on deck.

Standing on his own ship's deck, Grasper was at home. He glanced around at the wide ocean, and felt the breeze lifting his hair. At a short distance was the fleet and the three captured vessels, like junks with two masts each. The war vessels looked formidable as they skimmed slowly over the sea under easy



sail. Captain Grasper looked long at the fleet, and then conning his own craft, looked aloft.

"Eh, Davies, where's our bunting?" he asked of the mate at his elbow.

In a few minutes a flag was run up at the peak, and waving out in the breeze, it revealed a large, blood-red ensign, with fifteen golden balls in the centre arranged in a triangle. Grasper viewed it waving in the wind for some minutes with apparent pleasure, and then pointing to it he said, "One and all, Davies, here she flutters."

With a meaning smile, he next pointed to the fleet, and continued, "Do you see those three prizes, Davies? Well, lad, *one and all* is the flag I fly. Eh, lad?"

The tall mate understood his commander, and smiled at his remark, saying, "You're right, Cap'n Grasper. What's the use of them to niggers?"

The days passed slowly by, and often did the smuggler gaze at the prizes, and every time with a roguish smile upon his weather-battered face; but though they scoured the seas, no more prey could be found. The fourteen days were ended, and the fleet prepared to make for the island. Again Captain Grasper endeavoured to induce the Burmese chief to

bring the captured cargoes on board, but without avail. But he was not to be foiled, and being on the deck in company with the chieftain, Grasper remarked, "We must now arrange the order of attack, and I guess it will be a good plan if I lay off the fort and pepper them with shot. I can do it and keep out of harm's way, and, under cover of my fire, you can take your little snarlers in, and attack the fort itself."

"We cannot do better, brave captain," replied the Burmese; "but our prizes?"

"Ah, there's the rub," said Grasper. "My advice is, put all the best of the cargoes into one of the craft, and I'll keep her alongside; or you can keep a crew of your own on board, and I'll take care of her, then sink the others, and you'll save much bother. What do you say to it, friend Burman?"

The chieftain at first saw no other plan to adopt with respect to the prizes; but on second thoughts he said—"If we approach the fort under cover of night, and assault it then in the morning, a strong garrison can hold it; and some of my fleet, with your help, can guard the harbour against all attacks from the mainland, and I can also leave two war boats to guard the prizes."

“As you will,” replied Grasper, pondering over these words; “but we must keep a sharp look-out for the emperor’s bonfires on shore.”

Acting upon the smuggler’s advice in part, the Burman conveyed the most valuable parts of the cargoes into the largest prize, and scuttled the other two, their crews having been barbarously hurled into the deep when they first captured the vessels. All was now in readiness, and with their vessels well in hand, the little fleet, headed by the *Saucy Jane*, drew slowly towards the island, just visible in the horizon to the south-east. Night drew on, and as the dusk deepened over the ocean, the fleet sailed more rapidly. Before darkness had wholly mantled the scene, the war boats were all arranged in the order of attack. The brigantine, well prepared for action, with a strong watch on deck, and long swivel-gun uncovered, fell astern, in company with two of the war-canoes, having the heavily laden merchantman under their charge, with a small crew on board. The remaining vessels now crowded all sail, and propelled also by their strong oars, dashed off to the coveted prey.

The crew of the brigantine watched them sailing from sight in the gloom, and among the watchers

were the captain, mate, and doctor. All were alive with interest.

"Likely to be a good brush there, captain?" remarked the little man of medicine.

"You're about right, doctor," replied the captain; "they muster more than twelve hundred men; and bold, dare-devil fellows they are, too. Those guns in their bows, and their precious muskets, I fancy, won't do much damage; but let those brown imps get in close quarters, and they'll give a good account of their enemy, I'll warrant."

"True fellows to fight and wrestle, Captain Grasper," said the mate.

"They are all that, Davies. Did you notice they throw with the fore-hip, like the boys in the old country at home?"

"I noticed that," replied the mate. "The old fat chief has left somebody to take care of us, I see."

"The old fox. I guess he had half an idea a squall was brewing," said Grasper; and the three looked over the ship's side to the dark forms of the war-canoes guarding the prize. He continued, "They muster near two hundred men, I think, Davies."

"One hundred and eighty exactly, captain; I

took the trouble of counting them," broke in the doctor.

"Ah, doctor, you're always as straight as a handspike. Well, that's a tidy number, but not too much for our lads, eh, Davies?"

"Too much, Captain Grasper!" exclaimed the mate with surprise. "Why, sir, with only a boat's crew I would guarantee to walk her off."

"I believe you'd do it, Davies; but come below, lads, and let's arrange a little over a glass."

Down below they went, although the doctor was not fond of the grog himself; but he entered into the consultation, and gave many valuable hints.

"Well, call this settled, lads," exclaimed Grasper, as he drained his glass, and with one hand smote the table heavily; "and now up on deck, and get your ship in proper trim, Davies, and the crew at their stations."

By this time the brigantine had floated, rather than sailed, close upon the island, with the war-boats still at a short distance on her beam. The crew were all anxiously waiting and listening for sounds from the land, and scarcely had the captain stepped on deck again, when the boom of a cannon sounded over the

water, and in quick succession other reports followed, and they knew the assault had begun. The two canoes by this time had hauled slightly ahead, and were on the brigantine's starboard bow, whilst she was standing nearly south-east for the island, with the port tack aboard. Almost imperceptibly the smuggler craft altered her course a little, and glided towards the canoes. When the Burmese looked around, they saw her sharp bows close on their stern, and before they could divine the reason, the brigantine had sailed between the nearest canoe and the prize, thus getting a canoe on each beam and the merchantman alongside.

"Canoes, ahoy!" shouted Captain Grasper immediately, in the Burmese tongue. He wanted their commanders to step on board. "My look-out has seen the Boa's beacon on land," cried he, telling a direct lie.

Disarmed of suspicion, the canoes lay alongside, and the two pompous commanders clambered up the vessel's sides, and were received by the captain with marked civility, and at once ushered below. The mate remained on deck, and the crew, crowding the bulwarks, watched with keen interest the progress of

affairs. The Burmese still listened to the sounds of attack coming from the shore, which they were now fast approaching.

Apparently pleased and satisfied with their short visit, the Burmese commanders came out of the smuggler's cabin, and passed over the sides to their respective canoes, close alongside. The war-boat on the starboard side had the prize between it and the *Saucy Jane*. Scarcely had the Burmese entered their canoes and ordered the rowers to shove off again, when the starboard canoe found the prize lashed firmly to the brigantine! At the same instant, a great commotion was heard on the smuggler's craft. The captain's voice, sounding like a trumpet, shouted out—

“Over the side, Davies! smartly! Trice up the ports, and out with the guns, lads! Up with the helm, boy, up with it! Port braces, some of you! Bear a hand there, bear a hand!”

Like a lightning flash, the tall mate, followed by several well-armed men, tumbled over the side into the prize, and assaulted the little crew, with irresistible force; and some ran up the light sails of the merchantman. At the same instant, the brigantine's portholes were triced up, and the guns

run out. Obedient to her helm, the ship swung round before the wind; the sails were rapidly set, stun'sails hoisted, mainsail and head sails hauled down, and the *Saucy Jane* aided, rather than impeded, by the prize, also under sail, like an arrow from the hunter's bow, shot off on her race.

Staggered by the treachery and suddenness of this assault, the Burmese were expelled from the prize before they scarce knew the cause; but they were not to be easily duped. Grappling with the prize, the warriors in the starboard canoe savagely attacked the mate and his band of daring rovers; but numerous as they were, they met their match in the tars. The heavy cutlasses slashing right and left, the boarding-pikes wielded by active, brawny hands, and well-aimed pistol-shots, kept the Burmese in check.

On the port side, the war-boat at first endeavoured to close with the brigantine, but a broadside well aimed at the masts swept them away, and killed some of the warriors. Crippled with the wreck, they fell astern, sending a parting flight of arrows, and madly firing their single cannon, but without effect.



With the warriors of the other canoe, the mate and his band were still hotly engaged, but Grasper now poured down more men into the prize, and a well-directed shot from a starboard gun so crippled the war-boat, that it also fell astern, and as the maddened warriors bent their oars in pursuit, they saw the swift-sailing *Saucy Jane*, with the prize being dropped astern by a tow-rope, bound over the waves, and her dark form disappear in the gloom. Still they could see the lights in the stern cabin windows, and as the war-boats lay crippled, and many of the warriors wounded, tossing on the ocean, they gazed after the receding lights until they sank beneath the horizon in the south.

And how prospered the expedition? Repulsed in their attack on the fort, the fourteen war-boats retreated, and when morning broke over the waters, they descried their two companions alone on the ocean. The brigantine and the prizes were nowhere to be seen, and the Burmese chieftain, well knowing the disgrace which must follow these events, took his fleet back to Martaban with a sad heart, but without being pursued.

The grand army of thirty thousand warriors, with the Boa's band of "Invincibles," had scarcely entered

the Siamese domains, when they were met by a powerful host, led by the monarch of Siam. Desperate conflicts and skilful manœuvrings ensued. The Burmese pursued their usual military tactics of throwing themselves in strong stockades, but were driven back, though with great difficulty. One by one the stockades were assaulted, and carried by the bold Siamese, who drove back their invaders. Repulsed and much cut up, the army of Burmah made a retreat to their own lands, and Shembuan, mortified and maddened at this failure of his dreams of power, returned to his palace at Ummerapoora, and for some days would not be seen by his courtiers.

When he next appeared in the hall of council, the tidings of the defeat of his navy, and treachery of the stranger captain, in whose fidelity and aid he had trusted for success, rendered him so exasperated, that he vowed a terrible vengeance on Captain Grasper should he ever fall alive into his power.

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